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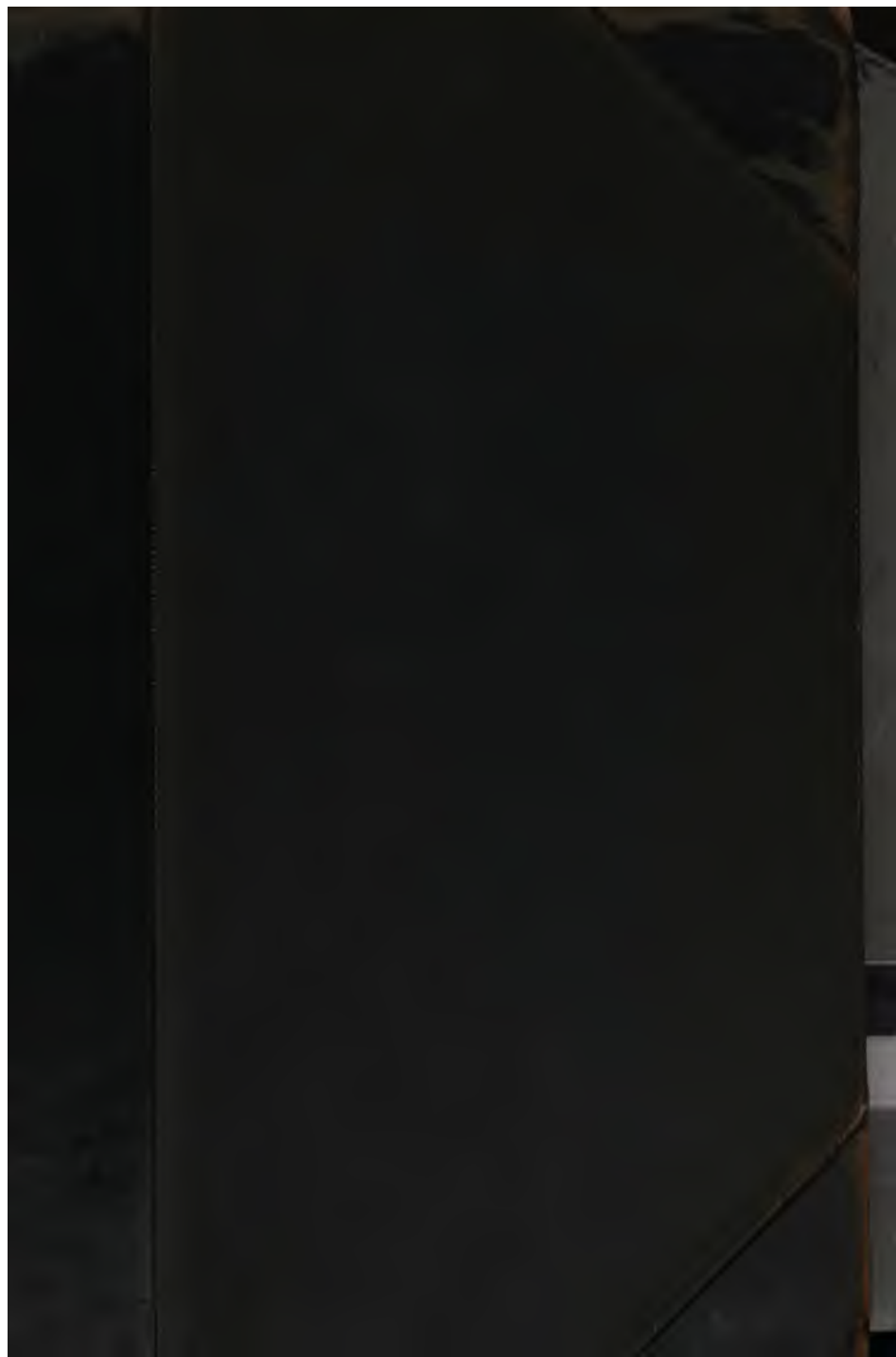
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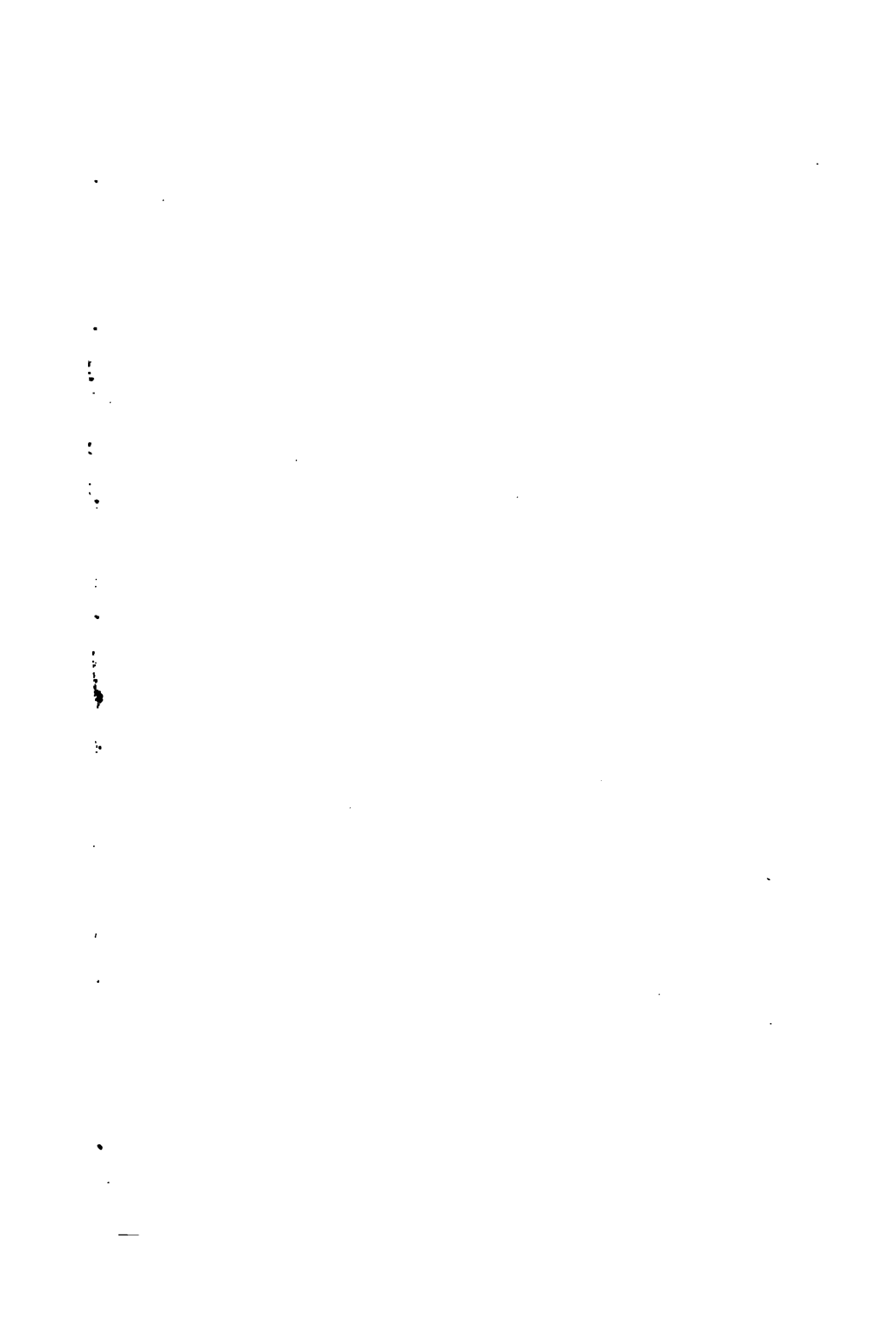
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Things I have Seen

and

People I have Known



Things I have Seen
and
People I have Known

BY
GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA
//

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

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1894

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER IX.—IN A MEXICAN SOMBRERO.

	PAGE
A Mexican Costume—Travelling “Light”—“Blue Flannel’s the Thing”—Dreams of Many Lands—General Grant—A Shot from a Federal Cruiser—Havana—Vera Cruz—General Santa Anna—How he Lost his Leg—An Escort of Zouaves to Puebla—A <i>Cantinière</i> —General Almonte—Augustin I.—Juarez—Bazaine—Cavaignac—General Le Flô—The Marquis de Montholon	1

CHAPTER X.—USURERS OF THE PAST.

The French Usurer and his Wife—Money-lenders and their Profits—“Kite-flying”—Loans in Kind—A Hundred and Twenty per Cent.—The Literary Money-lender—The Didactic Usurer “Mr. Thorough”—“Mr. Quasimodo” and his Breach of Promise—“My Tommy”	33
---	----

CHAPTER XI.—“FI. FA.” AND “CA. SA.”

John Doe and Richard Roe—Two Old Writs—Charles Dickens and the Troublesome Guest—Four Courses—The Old Spunging Houses—Copper Captains—“Washed Out of his own Buckets”—The Whitecross Street Prison—An Out-of-Elbows Club	51
--	----

CHAPTER XII.—THE FAST LIFE OF THE PAST.

Difference Between the “Fast” Life of the Present and that of the Past—The Effect of Evening Dress: A New Clothes Philosophy—Lord Frederick Verisopht and Sir Mulberry Hawk—	
--	--

	PAGE
"The Wildest Young Dog About Town"—A Museum of Stolen "Curios"—The "Mad Marquis" and his Frolics—Gambling in Regent Street—"Greeks"—Jack Thurtell and his Victim—Arthur Thistlewood: How he Was Ruined—"Crockford's"—Superintendent Beresford and his Raids—The "Night Houses" of the Haymarket—"The Pic."—Panton Street	71

CHAPTER XIII.—PANTOMIMES PAST AND PRESENT.

A Theological Professor with a Taste for Horse-racing—An Attempt to Recall Bygone Christmases—Boxing Day, 1835—Gruesome Curtain Raisers on Pantomime Nights—The Police in Early Days—Primitive Pantomime Tricks—A Criticism: "Few Tricks, Fewer Thumps, a Singular Lack of Bumps"—The Covent Garden Pantomime in 1820— <i>Za-Ze-Zi-Zo-Zoo</i> : Animated Dominoes— <i>Piñales du Diable</i> in 1839: A Run of a Thousand Nights—The Author Nicknamed— <i>Harlequin Billy Taylor</i> at the Princess's in 1851—A Feline Comedy—A Change of rôle	103
--	-----

CHAPTER XIV.—OPERAS REMEMBERED.

<i>Maria di Rohan</i> in 1847—A Voice "like melted Butter"—Alboni— <i>Artaxerxes</i> —Musical Criticism in 1836— <i>The Lord of the Manor</i> — <i>Tom Thumb</i> — <i>The Quaker</i> — <i>Love in a Village</i> — <i>Guy Mannering</i> — <i>Rob Roy</i> — <i>The Antiquary</i> —John Barnett, Michael Balfe, and Vincent Wallace	123
--	-----

CHAPTER XV.—SONGS THAT COME BACK TO ME.

Rossini and "the excellent M. La-da-di-da-de-da-de-day"—A Memory for Tunes—Arabic, Russian, and Spanish Melodies—A Phenomenon of the Musical Memory: the Probable Explanation—"The Evening Gun"—French Melodies—English Ballads and Choruses—"She Wore a Wreath of Roses" and its Composer—George Linley— <i>Lover's Ballads</i> —Songs to be Avoided	140
---	-----

CONTENTS.

vii

CHAPTER XVI.—PICTURES THAT HAUNT ME.

	PAGE
Pictures Recalled by Association—Jack Sheppard, with a Difference—Cruikshank's Presentment of the Housebreaker—A Portrait at Washington—Guido's "Beatrice Cenci"—Laying a Ghost—Valdes Leal's "Dead Prelate"—Gruesome War Pictures—Jan Van Beers—The "Operating Theatre" of the Inquisition at Madrid—John Martin's Big Pictures—Hablot Knight Browne's "John Gilpin"—Turner's Paintings—Two Works in Distemper	155

CHAPTER XVII.—TAVERNS THAT HAVE VANISHED.

Metamorphosed Taverns—George IV. and his Works—The Making of Regent Street—Great Swallow Street—Development of Club Life—The Old White Hart, Bishopsgate Street—The Old Elephant, Fenchurch Street, and William Hogarth—The Old Dog, Holywell Street—Changing Fashions in Drinks—Business and Liquor Fifty Years Ago—The Rainbow, in Fleet Street—The Cock—Peele's Coffee House	171
---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.—DINNERS DEPARTED AND DISCUSSED.

French and English School Diet Compared—Eating Fat by Deputy—"Joe's" Chophouse in Finch Lane—Market before "Meat"—"A devilish good Dinner for Threepence-halfpenny"—The "Thirteen Cantons"—Beef <i>à la mode</i> —A Mysterious Sauce—A Famous Boiled Beef House in the Old Bailey—The Waitress and the Barrister—A Disestablished Feast—Responding for the Visitors—The Sublime Society of Steaks—An Unspoken Speech—A Dinner at Clifford's Inn—An American Maxim	190
---	-----

CHAPTER XIX.—COOKS OF MY ACQUAINTANCE.

"The Wretchedest of Weaklings"—Boy and Girl Cooks—The Potato—Prices in the Past—Concerning Omelettes—Fricour's—How to Govern a Kitchen—Verrey's—Bertolini's—Hungerford Market—The Swan Tavern and its Denizens—A Man with a Grievance and a Devourer of Crabs—A Meeting with Soyer—Madame Soyer—A "Magic Stove"—Francatelli	219
---	-----

	PAGE
CHAPTER XX.—COSTUMES OF MY INFANCY.	
Boys in Petticoats—A "Skeleton Suit"—In Uniform—Schoolboy Attire—A Vanished Garment—The Carlist War and One of its Effects—A Gorgeous Costume	251
CHAPTER XXI.—HANDWRITING OF MY FRIENDS.	
Autograph Prices—Character in Handwriting—Flourishes Classified—The Origin of a "Lasso"—Charles Dickens's "Forked Lightning" Flourish—Compliments from Lord Brougham—His Handwriting—Mr. Beresford Hope's—Mr. Walter Thornbury's—Thackeray's—Douglas Jerrold's—Sir Arthur Helps's—Charles Reade's—Mr. Gye's—"Hans Breitmann's"	266

THINGS I HAVE SEEN
AND
PEOPLE I HAVE KNOWN.

CHAPTER IX.


IN A MEXICAN SOMBRERO.

A Mexican Costume—Travelling "Light"—"Blue Flannels the Thing"—Dreams of Many Lands—General Grant—A Shot from a Federal Cruiser—Havana—Vera Cruz—General Santa Anna—How he Lost his Leg—An Escort of Zouaves to Puebla—A *Cantinière*—General Almonte—Augustin I.—Juarez—Bazaine—Cavaignac—General Le Flô—The Marquis de Montholon.

In my study in London, on the top of a Chatwood's burglar-proof safe—a gift from Henry Irving—there has stood for a long time a shallow but broad case of ebony, of which three of the sides are of glass; and in this case is a hat—a very broad-brimmed, low-crowned article indeed, of white felt lined with crimson silk. The underside of the brim is profusely embroidered in gold, silver, and green silk, with images of eagles sitting on "nopals"—the eagle and nopal being the heraldic cognisance of Mexico. From

that strange land I brought the hat in the year 1864. It lay for years forgotten in some obscure wardrobe-drawer, and the moths had made sad havoc with the white felt; when, the article being accidentally discovered, it was carefully placed in a case which was hermetically sealed. I should add that by the side of this hat—known in Mexico as a *sombrero galonado*—there is a “pudding;” not, I hasten to explain, anything of a farinaceous or fruity kind, but such a “pudding” as very little children used to wear round their heads in the far-off by-gones, to save their skulls from injury should they chance to tumble down while essaying their first toddling. The “pudding” to my *sombrero* is, in short, a padded circular cushion, hollow in the centre; and it was placed round the crown of the hat to mitigate to the wearer the fierceness of the sun’s rays.

I wore that hat for several weeks in the spring of 1864; and in addition I donned a dark cloth, braided, round jacket, worn open, but embellished with silver sugarloaf buttons and loops; very wide trousers of soft leather slashed and puffed on the outer seams so as to show



the white linen *chapareros* or drawers beneath, and very large and long spurs, the rowels of which were so broad that they seemed to be emulating in their humble way the diameter of the "coach-wheel" hat itself. No waistcoat, if you please; a linen shirt with a turned-down collar, and a broad silken sash round the waist, something like the Anglo-Indian "cummerbund" or *kamar-band*; while a silk neckerchief passed through a ring, and a revolver in the hip-pocket of the trousers, completed the costume. This was the garb which I habitually wore when riding on horseback in the land of the Aztecs; and as in Mexico one is much oftener in the saddle than out of it, you may imagine that I soon grew accustomed to Mexican sumptuary ways. In journeying by *diligencia*, however, one wore ordinary travelling garments; and, at dinner in Mexico city, the usual sables and white cravat of civilised life were adopted: the dress-coat being, however, oftener of alpaca than of cloth.

The hat of which I have told you is in the glass case; but in a cabinet in another room I keep the revolver and the spurs, which came

from a town called Amozoc, famous for the manufacture of spurs of the old Spanish pattern. As for the braided and silver-buttoned jacket, the soft leather trousers, the *chapareros*, and the silken sash, those items were not my property; they belonged to a kind friend long since deceased, and whom I will call Don Eustaquio, who guided me from New York to Havana, thence to Vera Cruz, and so through the mountain passes of the Cumbres to the capital of the United States of Mexico, where, at his mansion in the Calle San Francisco, as well as at his country house at Chapultepec, he entertained me with a bounteous hospitality which I shall never forget. Englishmen journeying in America are frequently advised to "travel light"—that is to say, not to encumber themselves with too much luggage; but, considering the distance between the Empire City and the capital of Mexico, I scarcely think that it was practicable for a civilised mortal to travel much lighter than I did.

I only took with me a single and moderate-sized valise, containing toilet requisites, a sufficiency of linen, and a few suits of

white duck and brown holland. The last I had made for me under the advice of a cautious British Foreign Office messenger, who had, in his youth, seen much military service in the West Indies. He strongly counselled the adoption of white ducks. "And have them very well starched," he added; "under those circumstances the fleas will have no purchase, and will slip off." An equally discreet New York tailor, however, suggested that a few suits of brown holland should alternate with the white ones. "If you wear white from eend to eend," opined this sage, "I guess you must change every day; whereas there is at least forty-eight hours' wear in a brown-holland suit, even in the hottest of weather." But when, with what I thought justifiable pride, I exhibited my outfit to my friend the Don, he good-naturedly laughed me and my advisers to scorn. "You should have asked me," he said, "about a rig-out for Mexico. White ducks are no good, and brown holland is little better. Blue flannel is the thing; it is better than serge, and better than alpaca." But it was too late. "Our boat was on the shore and our bark was on the sea," and I had to get on

as well as I could with my too rashly ordered outfit.

More clothes than these I did not need. I was precisely of the same stature and build as my host; and he undertook to dress me in suits of his own garments during the whole of my stay in Mexico. This offer was prompted by a very sufficient reason. Puebla had only just been stormed by the French Expeditionary force commanded by Marshal Bazaine; and, although President Juarez had fled to the Rio Grande, and the French were, in a military sense, masters of Mexico, while the ill-fated Archduke Maximilian had been tempted by Napoleonic intrigues to abandon his beautiful domain at Miramar, near Trieste, and allow himself to be proclaimed Emperor of Mexico, the country between Vera Cruz and the metropolis swarmed with *guerrilleros*, or brigands; and the less luggage that a traveller from the coast carried with him the better.

My friend, who was an enthusiastic admirer of field sports and had a large stud at Chapultepec, had made extensive purchases of horses in New York; but these animals he had sent on to Vera Cruz by a merchant

steamer ; and, to avoid embarrassing complications with the Custom House, the noble steeds were supposed to represent so many four-footed members of a travelling circus, my host's stud-groom being, *pro tem.*, the Franconi or the Sanger in charge. If we did meet any bandits on the way, they would probably do us no harm if, when our travelling carriage happened to be attacked, no articles of much value were found in the baggage. The Mexican *guerrilleros* were rather a cowardly crew, not nearly so ferocious as the Turco-Greek brigands ; and although a traveller with little to be robbed of might not altogether verify the Latin proverb by singing in the presence of Mexican *ladrones*, he would not, probably, come to much grief unless he happened to be some conspicuous native merchant or banker, in which case he would in all likelihood be held for ransom in the approved Greek, Neapolitan, and Sicilian fashion. Now, my friend happened to be distinguished both as a merchant and as a banker ; but he intended to take very good care not to allow his name to be bruited about till he got safe home.

I have seen, in my time, a good many

countries and a good many cities ; and I judge of the amount of interest which those countries and cities have excited in my mind by the proportionate frequency with which I dream about them. And when I speak of dreaming, be good enough to remember that you can have distinct visions of bygone scenes and people that will rise before you when you are wide awake:—walking in the street, or travelling in an express train, or leaning lazily over the taffrail of a ship becalmed in the midst of the blue Pacific or the bluer Indian Ocean. You can dream vivid dreams at a public dinner, even when you are listening, perforce, to the prosing of some ancient general or admiral who is telling the Master, Wardens, and Court of Assistants of the Worshipful Company of Tobacco - Pipe - Stopper Makers that the military or naval services of this country are going to the deuce.

Ever so many times in the course of every twelve months I dream of Rome, and Venice, and Florence ; but with much greater rarity of Milan and Genoa, and scarcely ever of Turin. As rarely do I see Paris in my visions, as rarely Madrid ; but Seville and Granada are old day

and night visitors of mine, and so are Constantinople and Smyrna. If ever I dream of Athens it is in a bewilderingly confused manner, in which a small Brunswick, or a miniature Dresden, or a restricted Cassel, gets mixed up with the Acropolis and the Temple of Theseus. I try, generally with success, not to dream of Australia at all; and I was too short a time in India, and too sick and wretched when I was there, to preserve any very graphic memory of that wonderful land. Ceylon, with its spice-laden breezes, comes back to me very often; still not so often, most assuredly, as Mexico. I have but to glance at the *sombrero galonado* on the top of the safe, to take up one of the *espuelas de Amozoc*, to look at a little statuette of the Madonna—a *Dolores* with a beautiful, sorrow-stricken, imploring face—or at some wax figures dressed in Mexican costume, or at some pictures exquisitely worked with the brilliant feathers of tiny Mexican birds, to see at once, clear, sharp-cut, and many-hued, the mysterious country of Montezuma. I see the Cofre of Perote, the Peak of Orizaba, the long, dark *cañones* of the Cumbres, the broad belts of *Tierra Caliente*, teeming with

tropical vegetation :—coffee and tobacco, sugar-cane, arrowroot, indigo, manioc, bananas, the cotton plant, the fan-palm, the cacao ; and then my eye stretches across vast tracts of sandy desert, relieved only by clumps of cactus and prickly pear, and now and again by grisly ruins of ancient Aztec arches and pyramids ; while in the remote background is the wondrous city of Tenostitlan itself, dominated by the snow-clad mountains half shrouded in mist, Popocatapetl and Isclascihuatl ; the first nearly 18,000ft. high. I strolled into the Camera Obscura on the West Pier at Brighton not long ago ; and there was some delay in the darkened chamber while the conductor of the show was arranging his lens. I declare that when on the adumbrated field of the circular table there should have been produced the image of the Hôtel Métropole and ladies and gentlemen in European summer costume lounging in the porch of the great red-brick caravanserai, there were conjured up in my mind the two great mountains that tower over the valley of Mexico, rising suddenly out of a low range of hills ; their summits clothed with eternal snows, and

their bases shrouded in dense masses of dark green pine forest.

Most of us have heard of the extreme taciturnity of the late General Ulysses S. Grant. I had the honour to know that renowned captain, both in the States and in Europe. He was, as a rule, certainly most reticent of speech; but happening to meet him one evening at dinner at the house of my old friend Mr. James Ashbury, in Eastern Terrace, Brighton, of which borough Mr. Ashbury was then one of the representatives in Parliament, I chanced to tell the General that I had sojourned for a considerable time in Mexico. He had been there, I knew, as a young officer in the United States Army during the Mexican war. He began to talk about the country, especially about Popocatepetl, and he continued to discourse without surcease for full twenty minutes; and although that which he said deeply interested me, I confess that I was slightly disenchanted when the General concluded by remarking that he guessed that there was a remunerative amount of business to be done in the way of working sulphur mines in

the sides of the huge volcano. It is far from improbable that the mental vision of the two snow-clad mountains which rose before me in the dark chamber on the West Pier was obscurely due to the circumstance that three or four days previously I had been looking over a house in Eastern Terrace, and that I had remembered the dinner at Mr. Ashbury's residence at which General Grant talked so long and so fluently about his Mexican experiences.

A voyage to Mexico, at the period when the War of Secession in the States was at its height, was not unaccompanied by some little inconveniences, occasionally amounting to no small danger. All the ports in the Southern States, with the exception of New Orleans, which had been early captured by the Federals, were strictly blockaded; and during our run from New York to Havana we were boarded three times by Federal gunboats, the commander of one of which was kind enough to fire a shot, not over, but into our bows, because our skipper did not at once obey the signal commanding us to lay-to. In fact, I think the skipper, the first officer, and a select

party of passengers, were playing a cheerful game of poker when the shot from the Federal cruiser came crashing into the timbers forward. It was a lieutenant from the gunboat who boarded us, and he talked at first in a very menacing manner; but when our captain had conducted the gallant son of Neptune to his—the captain's own—cabin he emerged therefrom about ten minutes afterwards with an expression of perfect confidence and satisfaction on his manly countenance. Of course the steamer's papers had been submitted to him, and found to be in proper order; still, unless I gravely err, he had had another cause for complacency. "You see, sir," explained our thoughtful skipper, "when these navy chaps that does the blockading want a drink of whisky, they just bear down on the first passenger steamer they sight, and overhaul her to make sure that she isn't a blockade-runner. It was right good Bourbon that I gave that leeftenant." A queer time.

It was, nevertheless, quite necessary for Federal cruisers to keep the sharpest of eyes on passenger steamers hailing from New York and bound to the Gulf of Mexico. Not seldom

it would happen that when the ship had been at sea a couple of days the majority of the passengers would suddenly convey to the skipper the unwelcome information that they were militant Confederates ; and, after exhibiting bowie-knives, revolvers, knuckledusters, and other means of persuasion, they would take command of the steamer and run her, if they could, into a Secesh port. It took us four days and a half to reach Havana ; and unluckily we did not make the coast of Cuba till after sundown, at which time the port is closed ; so we had to cruise about all night outside the harbour and under the guns of the Morro Castle. Next day, however, we landed, and abode in the capital of Cuba for a whole week.

Havana, I have been told, has considerably altered—and for the better, I hope—since the spring of 1864. The fortifications of the town had only just been demolished, and broad suburban promenades were being formed. The hotels were altogether Spanish—that is to say, extremely vile. Slavery still existed, and beggars abounded. There was plenty, however, to be seen and to be admired, especially the great

Tacon Opera House—the Scala, one may almost say, of the Spanish West Indies, at which vast theatre I found as *prima donna assoluta* an old and esteemed friend of mine, Madame Guerrabella, who has sung under that name and with great applause in England, but who is better known to modern playgoers as the accomplished *tragédienne*, Miss Genevieve Ward. Of course one could not leave the Pearl of the Antilles without paying a visit to the great cigar manufactory, the “Real Fabrica de Tabacos” of the “Hija de Cabañas y Carvajal.” The firm were kind enough to present me with what is known in Spanish as an *obsequio*, in the shape of fifty of the very choicest *regalias imperiales* in a glass casket richly framed with gilt metal. I came upon the casket, much battered and shattered, a few weeks since in a lumber-room; and I wondered how many thousands of Cabañas I have smoked since March, 1864!

A few days' steaming in another ship took us to Vera Cruz, then a hot, dusty, bustling, and I should say fearfully malarious place, with no regular harbour, but only an open roadstead with a kind of natural breakwater in the rock,

crowned by the mediæval castle of San Juan de Ulloa. We did not anchor under the lee of that fortress half an hour too soon ; for almost immediately after our arrival there sprang up what in these latitudes is called a *Norte*: a storm the cousin-german of which, in amusing accordance with the rule of contraries, is known on the Australian shores of the Pacific as a "Southerly Buster." The sky is blue, the sea is calm, the sun shines brightly ; when on a sudden a black spot is visible just above the horizon. It grows ; it swells into a tremendous rain-cloud ; it bursts. The wind begins to howl ; the sky becomes inky black ; and the sea is lashed into one seething, heaving mass of white foam. In the case of a *Norte*, the prudent master-mariner eschews even the open roadstead of Vera Cruz, changes his course, and makes a run for the adjacent port of Sacrificios.

Vera Cruz in 1864 bore the strangest of aspects. There were several French men-of-war in the harbour ; and immediately you landed you found yourself surrounded by military natives of la Belle France, mingled with more or less ragged Mexicans, in striped *serapes* or blankets

and coachwheel hats ; swarthy women with *ribosos* or mantles of black cloth or silkily fine cotton drawn over their heads—the Mexican substitute for the mantilla of Old Spain—together with shovel-hatted priests, muleteers, half-castes, Indians, mendicants, and dogs innumerable. The narrow and dirty streets of the town were patrolled by droves of *zopilotes*—black vultures of the turkey-buzzard genus, which hopped about unmolested in the open and pestiferous gutters ; in fact, their vast capacity for devouring carrion had caused the *zopilotes* to be placed under the immediate protection of the police. The obscene creatures were, indeed, the only scavengers of Vera Cruz in my time—and they were no doubt very useful in freeing the town of some of its most revolting features. Still, for all the vultures could do, the place had a horrible smell ; and it was difficult to converse for five minutes with a native without reference being made to the far from fascinating subject of the *vomito*, or yellow fever, which was permanently domiciled there. Add to the evil odours and the carrion-birds the presence of myriads of sand-flies and mosquitos, and you

may imagine that my first impressions of the land of Montezuma were not very exhilarating. But my friendly Don bade me be of good cheer, and assured me that when we reached a higher level and emerged into the valley of Mexico I should find myself in one of the most delightful countries and climates in the world. And he spoke the truth. I should add that in addition to French troops of every branch in the Imperial service, there were quartered at Vera Cruz two regiments of Egyptian soldiers—coal-black Nubians in white uniforms and red fez caps, who had been lent—for a consideration, I suppose—to the Emperor Napoleon III. by the Pasha of Egypt—not then known as Khedive. These sable warriors were mostly of gigantic stature; and I was informed that excellent discipline was maintained in their ranks: the chief means of preserving it being that when a soldier did not do as he was ordered, his officer straightway proceeded to fell him to the earth with his sabre—it is to be hoped, with the blunt edge of the weapon.

My sojourn in Mexico brought me in contact with a large number of celebrated people. There was, to begin with, Don Antonio Lopes

de Santa Anna. The intercolonial steamer on board which I was a passenger picked up the ex-President of the Mexican Republic at St. Thomas—that pleasant little island with its white houses with green verandahs and bright red roofs—where the General had a country house, and solaced himself during exile by the diversion of cock-fighting. The General was coming to Mexico to offer his services to the Emperor Maximilian—and perhaps with a view towards his own personal interests, in which he had always manifested the liveliest concern—and was accompanied by his wife, whose personal *impedimenta*, comprising several enormous trunks of the pattern known to the Spaniards as *mundos*—worlds—a parrot in a cage, several lapdogs, and a guitar, almost filled the boat in which her Excellency was conveyed to the steamer.

Santa Anna himself was, in 1864, a hale old gentleman of sixty-six; he wore a glossy, curly, brown wig, very much resembling the historic peruke assumed by his Majesty King George IV., as you behold him in Sir Thomas Lawrence's full-length portrait of the First Gentleman in Europe in the full robes of the Garter; nor

were the Mexican warrior and statesman's high white cravat and stand-up shirt-collars altogether unlike those worn, in the portrait of which I have spoken, by the Fourth George. For the rest, Santa Anna was attired in a blue body-coat with gilt buttons, a formidable shirt-frill of the "pouter-pigeon" pattern, nankeen waistcoat and pantaloons, with a great bunch of seals pendant from the fob which contained his watch. He had a wooden leg; and I think he told me, after I had been presented to him by my friend the Don, who knew him very well, that he had lost the limb during the bombardment of Vera Cruz by the French in 1839: and that the surgical department of the Mexican army being at the time somewhat defective, his leg had been amputated by a local butcher. Santa Anna's complexion was pink and white, although he was Mexican born, but of unmixed Spanish descent.

He came of an ancient Castilian house, a cadet of which had emigrated to New Spain; and his earlier feats of arms had been in defence of the Spanish Monarchy against the partisans of independence. But he speedily threw in his

lot with the patriots ; and for twenty years was one of the most conspicuous personages in Mexican politics, and became President of the Republic and Dictator over and over again ; his tenures of power alternating with long periods of banishment. He was full of anecdote, and, I should say, was, on the whole, about as crafty an old fox as ever looted a henroost or doubled when the hounds were close upon him. But the French, when we arrived at Vera Cruz, would have nought to do with Don Antonio Lopes de Santa Anna. The commandant of the garrison, with three aides-de-camp, all very brave in white puggrees floating in the breeze, boarded us so soon as we were under the guns of the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, and politely but firmly communicated to General Santa Anna the positive orders of General Bazaine, that he—the ex-Dictator—was not to be allowed to land on Mexican soil. So, with the Señora, his spouse, and her multifarious belongings, the ex-Dictator transferred himself to another steamer bound direct for St. Thomas.

I must now mention that my hospitable Don's

hopes of not being recognised until his arrival in Mexico city were frustrated. We purposely avoided going to a *fonda*, or hotel; but repaired instead to the house of a mercantile correspondent of my friend, where, like Brer Rabbit, we "lay low" for a few days; but it oozed out, somehow or another, that the senior partner in the great banking-house of the city of Mexico was in Vera Cruz; and ere long we heard that the tidings had reached the *mala gente*, or brigands, who were making active preparations to seize our party and hold us to ransom. The *guerilleros*, notwithstanding all the vigilance of the French, were swarming in the Cumbres, and an exceptionally audacious bandit, whose sobriquet was "El Aguador"—the water-carrier—had made no secret of his intention to kidnap Don Eustaquio and his companions. For the Don he meant to ask, he said, a ransom of \$50,000. There was in his company, added "El Aguador," another person—an Englishman, whose name he could not gather, but who was fat. For *El Gordo*, the corpulent traveller, he should demand a ransom of \$2,000. Take physic, pomp! Here was a rascally Mexi-

can highwayman, who not only alluded uncomplimentarily to my personal appearance, but contemptuously appraised me at the pitiful price of £400 sterling. Thus, we waited at Vera Cruz until the commandant of the garrison of Puebla, who was a French general of division, could be communicated with; and he very obligingly placed a company of French Zouaves at our disposition as an escort as far as Puebla; promising us another escort—of cavalry, if possible—from that city to the capital.

The Zouaves were accommodated in a couple of large omnibuses, not only filling the interior, but crowding the roofs of those vehicles; and I am happy to remember that the gallant warriors in the baggy red breeches and the white turbans were accompanied by a French *cantinière*, who was under orders to join the headquarters of her regiment in Mexico city. A merrier, wittier, saucier, kindlier-hearted little lady in short skirt, scarlet continuations, and white canvas gaiters I never met. She eschewed the regimental turban, and wore a sailor's hat covered with black oilskin, rakishly set on one side of her curly brown head. The soldiers treated her with chivalric respect;


for the poor little soul was a widow with two children. Her husband, who was a sergeant, had been killed at Magenta. She had been in the Crimea, too, and expressed great surprise that the English regiments at Balaclava had no *vivandières*—nothing in that line, indeed, save a lady of dark complexion who kept an everything store at Balaclava, and whom she called *La Mère Cicol*—I suppose she meant that respectable West Indian universal provider, Mrs. Seacole, who did so much to minister to the well-being of our gallant soldiers in the Tauric Chersonese. Altogether, the little French *cantinière* whose husband was slain at Magenta has not ceased to shine as a very bright spot in my memory. From top to toe, in mien and speech, she was the counterpart of Béranger's sutler. "Soldats, voilà Catin!" I saw her afterwards on the march with her regiment; and she looked more like Béranger's heroine than ever—alert, saucy, confident, brave, as was her ancestress when she marched into Vienna, into Berlin, into Madrid, into Moscow.

So, with the aid of the two omnibuses full of Zouaves, we reached the capital in safety, and a

very few days after our arrival my friendly Don took me to the Palace and presented me to General Don Juan Népomucène Almonte, who was Regent of Mexico, or Chief of the Provisional Government, fulfilling all the duties of a chief magistrate until the arrival of the Emperor Maximilian. Almonte was a gentleman of middle stature, slight of limb, and extremely swarthy, even to the colour of copper, in complexion. He was altogether a remarkable man, being, in fact, the son of the famous *Cura* Morelos, one of the most conspicuous of the patriots who fought for Mexican independence. His mother was a full-blooded Indian; and the story was current that the bellicose curate's son derived his name of Almonte from the circumstance of his sire, at the moment of departure on one of his adventurous expeditions, being accustomed to say to his wife and the nurse who carried the infant, *El niño al monte*—the child to the hills; the densely-wooded mountain ranges being the habitual refuge, in troublous times, of women and children. Morelos was captured and shot by the Royalists; and his young son escaped to New Orleans, where a generous French Creole lady

adopted him, had him thoroughly educated, and would have set him up in business as a merchant ; but the youth preferred to return to his native country, to which he was recalled in company with other Mexican exiles by the unlucky Emperor Iturbide. His life had been one continual fever of agitation and intrigue ; but his education had stood him in good stead, inasmuch as he had been repeatedly despatched on diplomatic missions to London, to Paris, and to other European capitals. He spoke English and French fluently, and retained a lively and favourable remembrance of Lord Palmerston and of Lord Clarendon.


The palace of which I speak is a long range of stone or *adobe* buildings, of no great altitude, but of immense extent ; and the edifice is interesting as standing on the exact site of the palace of the ill-fated Montezuma. It occupies one side of the great Plaza of the city, to your right as you emerge from the long street which runs right through the town ; and although the topography of Mexico has in the course of nearly four centuries undergone many changes, the student of Prescott will without much difficulty



recognise the similarity between the structural arrangements of the modern city and those so inimitably described by the American historian. The great pyramidal temple of Tenos-titlan has been replaced by an imposing Roman Catholic cathedral, which fronts you as you enter the Plaza from the street just named. It is a splendid pile, which was begun so far back as 1573, and was not completely finished until 1791 ; but on one side of this magnificent fane there remains the great sacrificial stone of the ancient Aztecs. The cathedral faces you from the north ; the whole south side of the Plaza is occupied by the Portal, or market, the arcades of which are heaped high with all kinds of products and miscellaneous ware, including large quantities of characteristic native pottery, and which seem to be frequented at all hours by innumerable swarms of people of both sexes and all ages—white, half-castes, and Indians ; the women in *ribosos*, the men mainly draped in *serapes*. The attractions of the Portal were enhanced by a number of little gambling-tables held by crafty-looking men, at which you could play at the national and fascinating game of

monte, either for doubloons or *onzas de oro*, or for *clacos* or coppers.

The mention of the name of Iturbide reminds me—first, that the only commonly decent hotel in the Mexico which I remember was the Fonda Iturbide; and next, that I was introduced to two middle-aged gentlemen, who were the sons of the unfortunate Emperor just named. The elder Iturbide had begun his career, like Santa Anna, by fighting in the Royal army against the patriots; but he subsequently joined the Independence party, and was mainly instrumental in driving the Spaniards out of the country. The victorious General unwisely allowed himself to be elected Emperor of Mexico, and took the title of Augustin I. Naturally he was, in process of time, overthrown and banished; and as naturally, when he returned to Mexico, the faction in power tried him for treason and shot him. Mexicans of all shades of opinion have, however, been unanimous in acclaiming Iturbide as the greatest of their countrymen. His remains were interred with great pomp in the Cathedral of Mexico; his sword is preserved as a precious relic in the Chamber of Deputies;



and the two middle-aged gentlemen whom I knew were in receipt of pensions from the Government, which stipends, wonderful to relate, had always been paid with punctuality.

Of the two brethren I only preserve a distinct recollection of Don Augustin, who was celebrated for one rather remarkable quality. He was considered to be the only *caballero* in Mexico city who could drink a bottle of dry sherry without turning a hair. The devotees of temperance might clap their hands in ecstasy could they take note of the abstemiousness which prevails among the upper classes in the city of Montezuma. Champagne and light claret and a very little pure sherry make their appearance at high-class dinner tables ; but the air, owing to the great altitude of the plateau on which the city stands, is so excessively rarefied that you seem to be in a state of continual finger-snapping and head-tossing elation, and you require only homœopathic quantities of alcohol. On the other hand, the Indian population will get tipsy, whenever they have the opportunity of doing so, on the national beverage, *pulque*, a vinous liquor obtained by fermenting the juice

of the various species of the *agave*. It looks like butter-milk, it smells like rotten eggs, and it tastes like cider that has gone very wrong indeed. The Indians are passionately fond of it.

The country, just prior to the arrival of Maximilian of Hapsburg, was in the strangest condition. Mexico, Puebla, and Vera Cruz were completely under the military control of the French; but in the interior states the Republican party was far from being annihilated. Ex-President Benito Juarez, with a diminished following, had been slowly driven back to Zacatecas; still he continued to protest that he alone represented the National Government, and General Bazaine was unable to "destroy" him—a term so frequently used by the Great Duke during the Waterloo campaign with reference to Napoleon Bonaparte. That conqueror our Wellington certainly did "destroy"; but Juarez lived to fight another day, to murder, judicially, the unhappy Maximilian, and to become once more President of Mexico.

I deeply regret that I never encountered Don Benito Juarez—a most remarkable little copper-coloured man. He was known in Mexico as

El Indio, and had, I believe, very little, if any, Spanish blood in his veins. He was of very humble extraction; but, by the sheer force of indefatigable industry and sedulous study, added to great natural gifts, had got himself called to the Bar, and prior to his election as Chief Magistrate of the Republic, he had been President of the Supreme Court of Mexico. I mentioned General (afterwards Marshal) Bazaine just now, to whom I was presented by his kinsman, a young captain of infantry, who was generally known as "Le Petit Bazaine." The General struck me as neither more nor less intelligent than the average of French officers of rank with whom I have had the privilege to converse. Pélissier, Forey, Lebœuf, and Bosquet all seemed to have been turned out of the same mould; and all struck me as being very brave, hearty, but somewhat dense gentlemen; but Lamoricière had something of the patrician and the chivalrous about him; and Cavaignac was a general officer of decided character and marked political as well as military ability.

General Le Flò I met in St. Petersburg, where he was Ambassador, in 1876. He was

a most amusing, energetic warrior-diplomatist, who had been, I should say, both a lady-killer and a fire-eater in his youth. He was never tired of inveighing against the hopeless deterioration of French statesmen; and, on the whole, he reminded one somewhat forcibly of General Boum in *La Grande Duchesse*. One more personage of importance I may mention among the people whom I met in Mexico. This was the Marquis de Montholon, whom I had known as French Consul-General of New York; but who, when a shadowy crown was placed on the brow of an Austrian Grand Duke, was despatched as Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico. He was either the son or the near kinsman of General Montholon, the devoted adherent of the first Napoleon, who accompanied his fallen master to St. Helena, and remained there until the death of the exile of Longwood.

CHAPTER X.


USURERS OF THE PAST.

The French Usurer and his Wife—Money-lenders and their Profits—“Kite-flying”—Loans in Kind—A Hundred and Twenty per Cent.—The Literary Money-lender—The Didactic Usurer—“Mr. Thorough”—“Mr. Quasimodo” and his Breach of Promise—“My Tommy.”

I SUPPOSE that there have been money-lenders ever since the time when gold, silver, copper, leather, or tin was recognised as a circulating medium; and almost as old as the hills are the stories of the extortions of usurers. I was reading, a while ago, in a little sixteenth-century Book of Jests, how a French usurer, coming home to his wife after the transactions of the day, told her that he had done a very good stroke of business; inasmuch as he had lent the sum of six hundred livres to a young gentleman for a term of one year at fifty per cent. interest; had deducted the interest in advance, and consequently had disbursed only three hundred livres in hard cash. “You fool!” replied his better half, “you

ought to have lent him the money for two years, deducting two years' interest; and then you would not have had to part with any cash at all." The story may be, for aught I know, in Joe Miller; or it may have come from the "Book of the Sixty" in Old Athens; or it may possibly be recited in hieroglyphics on the oldest of Egyptian obelisks. Still, whatever may be the origin of the little apologue, it points to the universal belief that money-lenders are the very hardest of persons with whom it is possible to do business; and that if they were not the most rapacious of extortioners, they would never enrich themselves.

I have seen a good deal of usurers in my day, and, generally speaking, have been on amicable terms with many shining lights of the money-lending fraternity; but, strange to say, I have been led, after many years' experience of them, to the opinion that money-lenders, as a rule, do not acquire very great wealth. Some twenty years ago, a then very well-known bill-discounter, one of the good old sixty per cent. fraternity, incidentally observed to me, "People are quite mistaken in thinking that we make such a



tremendous pile of money out of stamped paper at three months. My dear sir, I can assure you, on my word of honour, that when I balance my books, *every Good Friday*, I think myself lucky if they show an all-round profit of ten per cent." Bacon, in his *Essay on Riches*, says that "usury is the certainest means of gain, though one of the worst;" yet the illustrious philosopher is fain to qualify his assertion as to the certainty of the usurer's gains when he proceeds to say that the money-lender's trade has flaws; "for that the scriveners and brokers do value unsound men to serve their turn."

There it is. Emboldened by the facility with which he has eaten up innumerable herds of small deer, the usurer imagines that it will be as easy for him to devour some huge Monarch of the Glen—with a coronet perchance on one of the tynes of his antlers—but the giant may turn out, in the long run, to be merely a Colossus of Insolvency; and the disconsolate usurer finds that he has only been throwing away his money. Be it as it may, I have not known many bill-discounters who have realised exceptionally large fortunes. I have heard, it is true, of two or


three millionnaires in the "kite-flying" line; but, on the contrary, I have been aware of a considerable number of once prominent money-lenders who have either retired from that peculiar branch of business, to take up some other avocation, or who have gone to dire and irremediable smash.

Again, it strikes me that there are not a quarter so many professional usurers at present as was formerly the case; and that "kite-flying," or, to use a less figurative term, dealing in accommodation bills, is a financial operation rapidly declining. Whether the Public Offices are yet haunted by Harpagons of the insatiably ravenous type depicted with inimitable humour in the Autobiography of Anthony Trollope, I have no precise means of judging; still, I should say that the practice of "kite-flying" on a comparatively small scale—the security being merely the signatures of the drawer, acceptor, and endorser of the "bits of stiff"—is not by any means so prevalent as it was thirty years since. Scores or hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling may still be lent to prodigal sons by a very few usurers on a larger scale; but my Lord Rakewell has usually some

tangible security to offer, in the shape of land or reversions of property. The money-lenders whom I remember in the past were quite content to do business on a strictly "kite-flying basis," and perhaps the Debtors' Act of 1869, which, although it did not entirely abolish imprisonment for debt, sufficed to empty and render useless all the debtors' prisons in London, had a great deal to do with reducing the traffic in accommodation bills. When the maximum of the duration of imprisonment for a debt was fixed at six weeks, the bill-discounting creditor felt that he was bereaved of one of his most cherished privileges—that of keeping his debtor in gaol for an indefinite term of years.

The abolition of the purchase system in the army may furthermore have conduced to the discouragement of the once flourishing trade of "doing bits of stiff." So long as a commission in her Majesty's service was a saleable article, the impecunious subaltern could always borrow. But the disestablishment and demolition of the Fleet, the Bench, and Whitecross Street prisons, were more immediately instrumental in bringing about the decline, if not the fall, of the accom-

modation bill. A "Father of the Marshalsea" is at the present day happily an impossibility. I must frankly admit that, although my acquaintance with bill-discounters goes back to the very early 'fifties, the bill-discounters who are described in Samuel Warren's "Ten Thousand a Year," and in Charles Lever's early Irish and military novels, flourished before my time. Most of us have read about the wheeled vehicle which a Dublin bill-discounter made his customers accept as an equivalent for part of the sum which he lent them, and which had returned to him and gone through so many hands that it came at last to be known as "the discount dennet." Then there was the Trapbois, who forced his victims to take a portion of their loans in pictures by the Old Masters, or percussion-muskets from the Tower, or bird-of-paradise and humming-bird skins, or models in ivory of the old *Téméraire*. Wine, too, was very frequently foisted on the acceptor of a bill, to the extent of fifty per cent. of the sum theoretically advanced, and I once had a friend who, getting a "kite" flown for a hundred pounds, received twenty-five pounds in cash and the balance in "leather." What he



did with the hides, or whether the leather consisted of saddles, bridles, portmanteaus, or luggage straps, I do not know.

There were, of course, as there may be still to a restricted extent, money-lenders and money-lenders. There were fashionable West End tailors who would advance thousands to customers whom they thought to be "safe," and crapulous money-spinners who turned over, so to speak, only shillings and pence, but who, on the whole, made far fewer bad debts than their fashionable congeners did. About Clare Market and the streets surrounding Lincoln's Inn, there used to hang, some forty years ago, money-lenders akin to those pests and curses to the French peasant, the *usuriers à la petite semaine*. Their vocation was to advance small sums, rarely exceeding five pounds, to temporarily necessitous tradespeople: the loan being generally for a week, and never exceeding a fortnight; the transaction being effected, not by a bill of exchange or promissory note, but simply by I O U. The interest which these benevolent assistants of struggling traders exacted would be nearer, I should say, a hundred and twenty than the proverbial sixty per

cent., and their business was, in the main, I apprehend, a remarkably lucrative one; since they dealt with persons who were continually in receipt of ready money, and who were, as a rule, ready and able to repay small loans; although indebtedness to any large amount would surely have driven them into bankruptcy. One of these hebdomadal money-lenders advanced cash exclusively to small undertakers; another devoted his attention especially to butchers; and a third was the beneficent genius of widows who kept small chandlers' shops.

Then there was the literary money-lender—a sympathising soul whose professed object in life was to minister to the necessities of young authors, for whom he always predicted a swift rise to fame and fortune. He was no advertising usurer, oh dear no; but he wrote you affectionate and strictly confidential letters, signed “A Retired Bookseller,” and asking for an interview. Eventually you found out that his name was, we will say, Skinemalive. He was the most obliging creature in the world, in the way of renewing bills when they became due; and by the time you had had, say, thirty

pounds in solid money from him, you found that you owed him on stamped paper at least a hundred. He was a rare rogue. Another type of the bland and almost pathetic usurer was a gentleman long since deceased, whom I may call the didactic bill-discounter. He had an office somewhere near Leicester Square; and he entertained you with high-flown discourse while the little formalities incidental to getting "a bit of stiff" done were being transacted by his clerks. He was curiously well read in Pope, and occasionally even favoured his clients with quotations from "Paradise Lost," while his epistolary style was based on Dr. Johnson's "Rambler" and "Idler"; his loftiest sentences, however, being enlivened by touches of his own peculiar humour. "Sir," he once wrote to a friend of mine, "the pressing entreaties you make for additional time being extended to you, for the discharge of the debt and costs for which I have obtained judgment against you, have not the ring of true remorse. They rather resemble the shriek of the impenitent malefactor in his cell, on the evening prior to his execution; and I intend to have all your molar

teeth to-morrow." That which the didactic bill-discounter intended to do, he generally did—and with a vengeance.

Somewhere in a street off the Strand, between Waterloo Bridge and the Adelphi, there flourished, when I was quite a young man, another facetious usurer whom I will call Mr. Thorough—he did things so very completely. He had a front office and a back office, the last his own private sanctum, which was, so far as I recollect, devoid of any furniture except the bureau at which he sat, an iron safe, a couple of chairs, and a hanging bookshelf, on which reposed an Army List, a Navy List, a Clergy List, and "Boyle's Court Guide." His humour was peculiar. When you called upon him with some stamped paper which you were anxious to get discounted, his first proceeding was to unlock a drawer, take out his cheque-book, flourish it in your sight, replace the book in the drawer, lock it, and then, putting his hands in his pockets, cheerfully address you in this wise: "Well, my buck; and what might you want with me?" You replied that you wanted a bill discounted. Impossible! There was no money in London—

absolutely no money in London. "Still," he would continue on being further pressed, "there will be no harm in taking just a peep at the young 'un. Has she got the names of the Governor and Company of the Bank of England on her back?"


He always spoke of an accommodation bill as a feminine entity. Then he would send for his clerk, "to see how his account stood at the bank." He doubted whether he had as much as ten pounds balance. He "did" the bill, eventually, and remarkably stiff interest he charged; but it took, so you thought, an immensity of time before Mr. Thorough could be persuaded to unlock the drawer again and sign the much-desiderated cheque. After that he would once more put his hands in his pockets, whistle, and cheerily inquire whether it was at Richmond or at Greenwich that you meant to take the little party in the pink bonnet to dinner, that same afternoon. Oh! he was very thorough; for while he was conversing with you his solicitor, who had an office above, had prepared something of the nature of a *cognovit* or confession of debt and consent that judgment should be entered up

against you. This document you signed ; so that if the bill was not paid at maturity, Mr. Thorough could at once obtain execution against you, thus saving himself the trouble of having to serve you with a writ and sue you in due form. I had a brief acquaintance, also, with one usurer—one of the class defined by Bacon as “cruel moneyed men”—who had an odd *penchant* for making little presents of an edible nature to his clients. Now it was pickled tunny, now dried sprats from Norway, now clotted cream from Devonshire. But he sued you nevertheless, ruthlessly.

These brief reminiscences of bygone money-lenders would be sadly incomplete were I to omit mention of two notable specimens of the race, both dead and gone these many years. Let me summon from the inmost recesses of my memory a truly curious personage indeed, whom I will call Mr. Quasimodo. He was scrupulously particular as to his personal appearance, and always dressed in glossy broadcloth of raven hue ; and in the centre of his spotless lawn shirt-front glistened a large diamond *solitaire*. His hat was very tall and very shiny, and was always encircled with a shallow crape hat-band ; but, on

being interrogated as to what bereavement he had recently undergone, he would return evasive answers; and it was generally understood by Mr. Quasimodo's intimates that the sign of mourning was a general and not a particular one, and that he wore it in sorrowful remembrance of clients who had fled to Boulogne, or who had passed through the Court for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors. He wore the nattiest little black kid gloves imaginable; and he was shod with unimpeachably elegant boots of French kid with varnished toes. The only thing which he needed to complete his engaging aspect was, say, a couple of feet in height; for, to tell the truth, Mr. Quasimodo was a dwarf. His physical shortcomings stood him once in unexpectedly good stead. Mr. Quasimodo—who was about fifty when I knew him—was by no means insensible to the tender passion; and on one occasion a handsome but wily widow brought an action against him for breach of promise of marriage: he being, as it happened, a very much married man, with a wife as tall as a Life Guardsman and two strapping daughters. The case was tried before

Mr. Justice Martin; and Mr. Quasimodo's leading counsel was that once highly popular advocate, Mr. Serjeant Wilkins, who, after reading his brief, told the defendant that the case was one that must be "bounced" through. And the Serjeant did bounce it through in a truly remarkable manner. "Gentlemen of the jury," he said, at the close of a most eloquent speech, in which he endeavoured to persuade the twelve honest men in the box that they were about the most intelligent and most patriotic jurymen that had ever been empanelled since the Trial of the Seven Bishops, "you have heard the evidence for the plaintiff; and, gentlemen of the jury, you have seen and admired that most bewitching plaintiff herself. Gentlemen, do you believe that this enchanting, this fascinating, this captivating, this accomplished lady would, for one moment, favour the advances or listen with anything save scorn and indignation to the amorous protestations of the wretched and repulsive *homunculus*, the deformed and degraded defendant?" Mr. Quasimodo looked up from the well of the court and piteously murmured, "Mr. Serjeant Wilkins! Oh, Mr. Serjeant Wilkins!"



“Silence, sir!” replied the Serjeant, in a wrathful undertone. “Gentlemen,” he continued, bringing his fist down heavily on the desk before him, “do you think that this lovely lady, this fair and smiling creature, would ever have permitted an offer of marriage to be made to her by this deplorable atom of humanity, this stunted deformity, *who would have to stand on a sheet of notepaper to look over twopence?*” The jury at once gave a verdict for the defendant. Mr. Quasimodo’s exiguity of stature was assuredly no fault of his; still, it must be mournfully conceded that, so far as the discounting of bills went, a more flagitious little villain rarely existed. He came to deserved grief at last; and after an interview with the magistrate at a police-court, and making some very complicated arrangements to repair certain wrongs which he was accused of having done, he retired from the kite-flying line of business, and subsided into private life, from which he did not emerge until the period of his decease.

A very different type of the bill-discounter was “My Tommy.” He was a solicitor who at one time had been in considerable practice; but

who, having realised a considerable fortune, turned his attention to dealing in bills. When I first became acquainted with "My Tommy," he was reputed to be worth at least eighty thousand pounds. He dwelt in a handsome house at the West End, where he gave excellent dinners, with copious liquid accessories in the shape of admirable dry champagne and rare old port. So, you may remind me, did Ralph Nickleby give dinners at his house in Golden Square; but the Nickleby banquets were exclusively discount dinners; while "My Tommy's" were really prompted by his own profuse hospitality, and love of good company and sparkling conversation. Whether any of his guests, whom I used to meet at his well-spread board, were in his debt, was a matter between "My Tommy" and themselves; but he was always the cheerfullest and most generous of hosts, and one foregathered at his table with all kinds of legal, political, and literary notabilities. I first met the late Mr. Isaac Butt, M.P., at "My Tommy's"; and Mr. Commissioner Murphy was one of his most constant visitors. "My Tommy" was a little man, but he had a most symmetrical figure,

and would have looked very well indeed in black silk shorts and stockings. He was quite conscious of the symmetry of his lower limbs, which he was wont to say with smiling complacency, were as "fine as a fawn's." In matters of business, however, "My Tommy" was the sharpest of sharp practitioners. It was he who, when a body of four Government clerks waited on him one forenoon, three of their number being respectively the drawer, acceptor, and indorser of a "bit of stiff," inquired "whether the young gentleman who was looking out of the window wouldn't like to jump up behind." The young gentleman who was looking out of the window was not in any way concerned in the negotiation of the bill, and consequently he did not see his way towards "jumping up behind," or giving an additional endorsement to the document to be discounted. "My Tommy's" prosperity did not continue to the period of his death. Very late in life, and most unfortunately for himself, he came into possession of a racing stud, his acquisition of which I suppose had some kind of connection with bills. "My Tommy" went on the turf; and he lost, I am afraid, all his money.

He was not altogether friendless in his declining years ; and among the usurers that I have known “ My Tommy ” was certainly the least rapacious and the warmest-hearted.

CHAPTER XI.

"FI. FA." AND "CA. SA."

John Doe and Richard Roe—Two Old Writs—Charles Dickens and the Troublesome Guest—Four Courses—The Old Spunging Houses—Copper Captains—"Washed Out of his own Buckets"—The Whitecross Street Prison—An Out-of-Elbows Club.

ARE there any students of legal antiquities, I may ask, who mourn the disappearance of time-honoured—or dishonoured—processes and usages from our system of civil jurisprudence? Nero's nurse, together with a lady of somewhat light reputation, wept, we all know, for the dead despot, collected his worthless remains, and gave them decent sepulture; but are there any elderly persons who, being cognisant of what was the state of the law of debtor and creditor, say, fifty-five years ago, feel inclined to drop a tear, or even to heave a soft sigh over the tombs of departed processes and pleas of the British Themis? Having occasion, the other day, to consult a quite up-to-date handy book on the Principles of Law and Equity, purporting to be compiled for

the purpose of saving laymen the trouble and expense of consulting a solicitor in trifling matters, I was mournfully surprised to find that although the writ of *Fieri Facias* had a place in the index, no mention whatever was made therein of the more formidable process of *Capias ad Satisfaciendum*. With equal grief and bewilderment did I also note the absence of those very early friends of mine, John Doe and Richard Roe.

The younger generation of readers may even ask who John Doe and Richard Roe were; but I believe that I am right in stating that Doe and Roe were the leading characters in a merry little farce called "Legal Fiction." For example, a bogus plaintiff, Doe, complained that a sham defendant, Roe—the release for a term of years having been made to Doe by the claimant, and Doe having entered thereupon—had ousted him; for which Doe claimed damages; and subjoined to this declaration was a notice to appear, addressed to the tenant in possession by name, in the form of a letter from Roe, informing him that he, Roe, was sued as a "casual ejector" only, and had no title to the

premises, and would make no defence; and therefore advising him to appear in court and defend his own title; otherwise he, Roe, would suffer judgment to be had against him, and thereby the party addressed would be turned out of possession.

At this time of day, the Doe and Roe burletta seems as absurd as the story of the mongoose which was to be used as a means of curing a person suffering from *delirium tremens* and the delusion that he saw strange creatures crawling round a grandmother's clock; but which, confessedly, was not a real mongoose; yet, for all the unreality of Doe and Roe, they endured for centuries, and may have been in their time the means of some millions of pounds sterling changing hands.

And the *Capias ad Satisfaciendum*! It was a rare old writ. The writ of *Fieri Facias* took and continues to take your goods in execution; the writ of *Capias* took yourself. In my boyhood it could be issued for a judgment debt of any amount; but by an Act passed in the eighth year of Her Majesty's reign it was enacted that no person should be charged or taken in

execution on a judgment obtained in any court, superior or inferior, in any action for the recovery of a debt not exceeding twenty pounds. Thus, as the dramatic action of "Pickwick" takes place at least a dozen years prior to the passing of the Act of Parliament in question, Sam Weller need not have borrowed so large a sum as five-and-twenty pounds from his father. Ten pounds would have been enough for the purpose of the good and faithful servant when he wished to be arrested and consigned to the same debtors' prison in which his master was languishing. The well-known episode in "Pickwick" will, on the other hand, afford an adequate illustration of the celerity of the operation of the writ of *Capias ad Satisfaciendum*, or "*Ca. Sa.*," as it was familiarly termed.

Immediately after Sam had borrowed the money from his stout sire, a pettifogging attorney, Mr. Solomon Pell, was sought out by Mr. Weller, senior, who desired him to issue a writ forthwith for the sum of twenty-five pounds and costs of process to be executed without delay on the body of one Samuel Weller. The attorney then led the elder Mr. Weller

down to the Temple to swear the affidavit of debts, and subsequently the Wellers, *père et fils*, and a select gathering of friends, held a convivial meeting in a tavern-parlour, where they tumultuously toasted the Chief Commissioner of the Insolvent Court and Mr. Solomon Pell for having between them "whitewashed" or effected the discharge of a gentleman in the coaching line who had got into pecuniary difficulties. At four o'clock the sheriff's officer arrived and arrested Sam for the debt and costs; and so off they all set—the plaintiff and defendant walking arm-in-arm, the officer in front, and eight stout coachmen bringing up the rear. At Serjeants' Inn Coffee House the whole party halted to refresh; and the legal arrangements being completed, the procession moved on again till it reached the gate of the Fleet Prison, where the jovially-sympathetic party, taking the time from the plaintiff, gave three tremendous cheers for the defendant, and, after shaking hands all round, left him.

The "legal arrangements" briefly alluded to above were merely the suing out of a writ of *Habeas Corpus* on the part of the arrested debtor;

the return to the writ on the part of the plaintiff, and the issuing of an order by a judge sitting in chambers at Serjeants' Inn for the defendant to be committed to the Fleet. Obviously the consummate art of Dickens led him to desist from again describing the little comedy of the *Habeas Corpus*, which he had already so inimitably sketched in the case of the arrest of Mr. Pickwick. As an attorney's clerk the great novelist may have served hundreds of writs and sued out as many Capiases and Habeas Corpuses; and it is interesting to those who not only hang lovingly over every line that he penned, but had the advantage of knowing him personally, to remark how the image—evidently drawn from the life—of Mr. Namby, the bailiff who arrested Mr. Pickwick, dwelt in Dickens's mind long years after the Fleet Prison had vanished from the face of the earth.

It must have been about 1860 that I was present at a dinner given at the Freemasons' Tavern in honour of Charles Dickens the Younger, who was about to start on a voyage to China; and the chair was occupied by his illustrious father. One of the company, a very well-

known man of letters, long since deceased and in his latter years desperately impecunious, had partaken somewhat too liberally of the juice of the grape, and was getting rather troublesome: whereupon Dickens whispered to his next neighbour "Tell him"—meaning the troublesome guest—"that there is a stout party downstairs with bushy whiskers and top-boots, in a one-horse chaise. He will be glad enough, then, to escape by a side door." The novelist had evidently before him at that moment, twenty-four years after he had written "Pickwick," the image of Mr. Namby with his whiskers, his rough greatcoat, his glaring silk handkerchief, and his boots. Why the sheriff's officers of the past should have habitually worn top-boots I know no more than I do why the bailiffs of the seventeenth century were generally Flemings.

When you were arrested on a *Capias* in the county of Middlesex, four courses were open to you. First, you might pay the debt and costs; but even under these circumstances you were detained—usually at the office of the bailiff—until the plaintiff or his solicitor could be communicated with, and a discharge for the debt given.

Next, if you had a sufficiency of petty cash about you, you might elect to be taken to the sheriff's officer's own private place of durance, which, in popular parlance, was known as a "spunging-house." If you could not afford to pay for the somewhat costly accommodation provided at these private penal hotels, you were taken to the common debtors' gaol in Whitecross Street ; but, fourthly, if you had the two pounds ten shillings necessary to obtain a *Habeas Corpus*, you might be transferred from the custody of the sheriff's officer to the Fleet or to the Queen's Bench.

The old spunging-house has been amusingly described, both by Dickens in "Pickwick," and by Thackeray in "Vanity Fair" and in some of his shorter stories. The places of this kind which recur to me were situated respectively in Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane ; in a court, the name of which I forget, opening out of the west side of the lane in question ; and in Bream's Buildings, between Chancery Lane and Fetter Lane. The Cursitor Street one may perhaps be defined as the Mivart's among these peculiar hosteleries. There was nothing to mark the fact of the house

being a place of enforced detention, save rows of substantial bars to all the windows, and the roofing over with open ironwork of the small paved yard in which the gentlemen in difficulties took exercise. The outer door was, of course, strongly bolted and barred at night; otherwise the interior was one of the queerest of Liberty Halls imaginable. The payment of a guinea a day entitled the *détenu* not only to a bed, which was clean enough and comfortable enough, but to the use of an apartment called the coffee-room, on the first floor back, overlooking the paved yard. I scarcely think that, save at breakfast time, much coffee was consumed in this place of social and convivial intercourse. "Pegs" of spirits and aerated waters, or "modest quenchers" of bitter beer or brown stout, were much more to the taste of the unwilling guests and their friends than the product of Mocha or other localities whence that which is erroneously known as a "bean," but which is in reality the seed of a berry, is supposed to come. Smoking was the almost universal rule—and, indeed, the curtains, the furniture, and the carpets reeked with the fumes of at least fifty years' almost incessant puffing of

cigars and pipes. Miserably pathetic scenes might be witnessed on occasion in this Cursitor Street coffee-room—spendthrifts, whom their mothers came to pity or their fathers' solicitors to reproach—mere boys, who in a year or two had run through princely fortunes; hoary-headed old *roués*, copper captains, ruined speculators, chronically distressed poets; penniless parsons, impecunious lords and incurably insolvent baronets, who had managed to live luxuriously on the credit of their titles, but had been towed at last into this shabby dock to be soon laid up in ordinary in the Bench; while mingled with these were the light-hearted gentlemen in difficulties who were continually getting arrested as drawers or acceptors of accommodation bills, and who regarded a few days' sojourn in a spunging-house and a longer residence in the Bench as only a cheerful episode in their careers.

The copper captains abounded among these gay prisoners. There was the celebrated Captain Jack I——, who was wont facetiously to pretend that next morning would never fail to bring about the payment of his debts by a wealthy

aunt in Devonshire; and who continually sat on the chair nearest the coffee-room door, with his hat on, his walking-stick in his hand and a railway rug across his knees, as though awaiting the imminent arrival of his solicitor with an order of discharge. Then there was rattling Tommy D——, a son of one of Her Majesty's judges, who had been a barrister and a Government clerk, a lieutenant of marines, a company promoter, a newspaper proprietor, and an advertising agent, and was so constant an *habitué* of the Cursitor Street caravansary that one morning, on his fresh arrival, he looked round the coffee-room, and especially at the very dingy prints which adorned the walls, and asked, in a tone of affected surprise, "Where is the view of Corfu?"

In addition to the common-room there were private apartments to be had at the spunging-house. These apartments were sometimes very handsomely furnished; and their occupants were often gentlemen occupying very exalted positions indeed in the most fashionable society. It was usually French hazard at Crockford's, or plunging on the turf, or a Pet of the Ballet that had


brought them to this pass. Only traders could be made bankrupts five-and-fifty years ago ; and a gentleman in difficulties, when he had moved from Cursitor Street to the Fleet in Farringdon Street, or to the Queen's Bench in Southwark, and had grown tired of incarceration, had only to file his petition and to get " whitewashed " at the Court for Insolvent Debtors in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. No kind of social stigma attached to a gentleman who had gone through this cheerful process. In these days bankruptcy means, among other things, compulsory withdrawal from the club or clubs to which the bankrupt belongs ; but no such unpleasant consequence was associated with insolvency. No one was ashamed of confessing in open court that he had not one farthing wherewith to discharge indebtedness possibly amounting to many thousands of pounds ; and so easily and so quickly conducted was insolvency, that in one notorious case a Commissioner of Insolvency—a very humorous and highly popular barrister—positively went through his own court and was whitewashed, so to speak, out of his own buckets. The Lord Chancellor did not call

on that learned Commissioner of Insolvency to resign.

Whitecross Street Prison was tenanted, as a rule, by debtors as hopelessly poverty-stricken as those who occupied the Old Marshalsea in Southwark, and the debtors' side of Horse-monger Lane Gaol. For gentlemen in difficulties arrested in the county of Surrey there was a single spunging-house in a street somewhere off the Blackfriars Road. I remember visiting a friend there once, who told me that the apartments were extremely comfortable. The sheriff's officer was an accomplished whist-player, and he had a musical daughter, who used to play and sing to the gentlemen in "diffs." My friend used to call her Miss Blondel, and pictured her as warbling "Oh, Richard, Oh, mon Roi!" to some exceptionally good-looking captive. The mournful inhabitants of Whitecross Street had very rarely passed through the spunging-houses of Cursitor Street or of Bream's Buildings, and the bailiffs who arrested them took them straight to Whitecross Street. The prison itself was ugly and dingy enough; but it had no very specially gaol-like appearance. Four high brick

walls, duly spiked, enclosed an area of about an acre of ground, within which were the day-rooms and dormitories and two well-paved yards for exercise, the whole edifice being well ventilated and scrupulously clean.

The prison was the property of the City Corporation, and was administered by a governor, a deputy-governor, and a sufficient number of warders, or, as I think they used to be called half a century since, turnkeys. All these functionaries received handsome salaries, and the governor was generally a military man. There was a standing joke among the *habitués* of the prison that the governor should always be knighted and created a "Ca.Sa.B." The joke was a sorry one; but a very little fun went a very long way in this abode of misery, which held within its walls not only spendthrifts and ne'er-do-weels, but impoverished tradesmen and needy working-men committed for non-payment of sums as low as forty shillings. In addition to these there was usually among the *détenus* a Chancery prisoner—that is to say, an unfortunate individual consigned to Whitecross Street, by decree of the High Court of Chancery, for contempt of court,



for not filing an answer to certain legal proceedings. The Chancery prisoner in "Pickwick" is about one of the most pathetic characters that Dickens ever drew; and that deplorable creature had managed to get transferred to the Fleet; but there were a few replicas of that pitiable type in Whitecross Street, and to a much greater extent in the King's Bench. The Inland Revenue had also its captives in every debtors' prison. There was a duty of eighteenpence payable on every advertisement inserted in any newspaper; and, as journals started without sufficient capital were in the habit of coming to grief with painful frequency, and the penalties for non-payment of the advertisement duties were cumulative, there was usually a sprinkling of indigent publishers as prisoners, they being responsible to the Crown for the debts of the newspaper proprietors.

Of course Whitecross Street had a chapel and a chaplain, an infirmary and a medical attendant, who enjoyed the liberal salary of three hundred a year. In each yard was posted, in a conspicuous position, a tall black-board, on which was painted, in letters of gold,

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a list of all the charitable bequests made at different periods by deceased benefactors for the succour of the poor debtors. There were not many of these endowments belonging to Whitecross Street, but in cases in which the prisoners were altogether destitute, they received a comparatively liberal allowance of rations from the Corporation. At one corner of the yard was a kind of huckster's stall, or "everything" shop, where the prisoners' caterer sold butcher's meat, bacon, sausages, eggs, bread, butter, cheese, and other articles of food; and twice a day he was allowed to sell one pint, and not more than one pint, of beer per head to such prisoners as could afford malt-liquor. A quart of beer or a pint of wine per diem was the maximum amount of strong liquor fixed by order of the Secretary of State for the Home Department. Spirits were altogether prohibited, and as the prisoners slept in large dormitories, and there were no private rooms, the existence of a "whistling-shop," such as we read of in the description of the Fleet in "Pickwick," was, practically, an impossibility.

The day-rooms, or wards, each held about fifty prisoners, who took their meals in common.

Some boarded themselves; others were content to pay two shillings and sixpence per diem to the day-steward, who provided breakfast at nine, luncheon at twelve—when the first pint of beer was procurable—and dinner at five. A day-warden received eight shillings a week for cleaning the knives and forks and waiting at table; while the bed-warden made the beds, cleaned the boots, provided hot water for the toilet, and assisted in waiting at table: for which services he received seven-and-sixpence a week. Cups and saucers, plates, jugs; the knives and forks aforesaid; mustard, salt, and pepper were all provided from a common fund, which was formed by every member paying three-and-sixpence upon entrance, and one shilling per week while he remained in prison. Plenty of newspapers were supplied out of this fund.

On certain evenings in the week the gentlemen in difficulties had recitations and debates; and on Saturdays there was a vocal concert, instrumental music being for some reason or another forbidden. Smoking was mercifully permitted between the hours of meals and until

the prisoners went to their dormitories at night ; but no gambling was allowed, and cards were strictly forbidden. Chess, draughts, backgammon, and dominoes were, however, tolerated. It will thus be seen that, in comparison with Holloway or the provincial gaols in which debtors are still confined for non-payment of judgment orders or neglect of judgment summonses in the County Court, Whitecross Street Prison was quite a jovial and festive place—an out-of-elbows club, indeed, for which nobody cared to be a candidate, but election to which, when a *Capias* was issued against you, was compulsory. When, however, you became a member of this City *cercle*, existence was certainly endurable, and on thirty shillings a week a prisoner in Whitecross Street might even enjoy no small amount of luxury. It was coarse certainly, but neither scanty nor squalid. Over the chimney in one of the wards some prisoner of artistic taste had blazoned, in colours and gold-leaf, a burlesque heraldic achievement, and beneath, in large Gothic letters, was the motto “ *Dum Spiro Spero.* ” The prisoners tried to live up to the motto ; but you had only to scan their faces in

the intervals of the singing and the reciting, and the chess and backgammon playing, to see hopeless wretchedness marked on the features of at least three out of four captives—marked there as distinctly as the wretch doomed to death in the tribunal of old Greece had the fatal word "Thanatos" branded on his brow.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FAST LIFE OF THE PAST.

Difference between the Fast Life of the Present and that of the Past—The Effect of Evening Dress : A New Clothes Philosophy—Lord Frederick Verisopht and Sir Mulberry Hawk—"The Wildest Young Dog About Town"—A Museum of Stolen "Curios"—The "Mad Marquis" and His Frolics—Gambling in Regent Street—"Greeks"—Jack Thurtell and His Victim—Arthur Thistlewood : How He was Ruined—"Crockford's"—Superintendent Beresford and His Raids—The "Night Houses" of the Haymarket—"The Pic."—Panton Street.

IF there be anything of the character of that which used to be understood as "Fast Life" in the social manners of the present epoch, a good many years have passed since I knew anything about such fastness. The records of the courts of law and police prove, sadly enough, that vice and profligacy are prevalent in most classes of society; and that in the lower grades of the *couches sociales* there is still a deplorable amount of drunkenness and ruffianism, which will abate, it is to be hoped, when the people are better lodged, better taught, and better clothed, but which will not, I should say, be

stamped out by any drastic Acts of Parliament for bringing down to the Pump a people who have been convivial in their habits for more than a thousand years. Still, the street affrays of which one reads; the assaults on the police; the furious driving by drunken revellers, and the vagaries of unfortunates, whose names are only too well known, do not constitute such a "fast life" as I remember very well some fifty years ago, and in which, when I grew up, I took a rather active part myself. The "fast" life of the past, on which I propose to descant, was one that was enjoyable—if enjoyment is the proper term to be given to madcap dissipation and mischievous practical joking by almost every class in male society.

There had been little solution of continuity in that "fast" life, so far as the metropolis was concerned, since that tremendous reaction against Puritanism—the Restoration. The Mohocks of Queen Anne's time, among whom was a son of the Right Rev. Bishop Burnet, were the lineal descendants of the Whipping Toms of Charles II.'s reign. Rochester and Sedley transmitted their besmirched

laurels to the bloods and beaux who get drunk and gamble and fight duels in Hogarth's pictures ; and the traditions of excess and devilry in high life were followed with amusing fidelity throughout the reign of George III., which began with the scandalous frolics of Jack Wilks and the Friars of Medmenham Abbey, and ended with that "fast" life which has been so divertingly depicted in Pierce Egan's "Life in London." I am not old enough to have met Bob Logic or Corinthian Tom in the flesh ; although I can remember witnessing a performance of "Life in London," in which occurs the celebrated dance of "Dusty Bob and Black Sal." Still, about the close of the reign of King William IV. and the accession of Queen Victoria, I must have known and listened to a good many middle-aged gentlemen who, in their hot youth, had been renowned for their skill in fisticuffs and their fondness for ratting, badger-baiting, and cock-fighting, and to whom a dining-room mahogany possessed one attribute which it has long since lost—that of being a table under which the large proportion of the guests were accustomed to subside when they had swilled too much port or sherry.

The riot, the turmoil, the inebriety, the pugnaciousness, of which you obtain inklings in the literature and the newspaper files of fifty years ago, were, I take it, very largely due to the circumstance that the attitude of England towards foreign nations, at intervals throughout the eighteenth and continuously during the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century, had been much more frequently one of war than of peace. In a time of arms laws are mute, says the old Latin saw; and, perhaps, epochs when there are almost incessantly wars and rumours of wars afoot are more conducive to coarseness and brutality of manners than when the world is calm and meek-eyed peace reigns supreme. Generally speaking, I incline to the impression that what little "fast" life we have left among us in the upper ranks of society has had its roughness materially modified by the habit of donning evening dress on the slightest provocation; of smoking cigarettes; of wearing gardenias in the button-hole, and of drinking lemon squashes, or at least modicums of ardent spirits largely diluted with aerated waters. A gentleman in a sable swallowtail coat, a white cravat, a

snowy shirt-front with a diamond stud in the centre, and a Gibus hat, thinks twice before he "punches" the heads of cabmen and defies police-constables to single combat; and when we remember that the present time is one in which even prize-fighters appear in evening dress, I think there is something in my contention that "fast" life in 1894 is altogether more polished, more refined, and perhaps a little less courageous and daredevil than the roaring horseplay and the coarse dissoluteness of the past.

I began to look at life with keen curiosity—a curiosity which at this present writing is not by any means satiated—about the year 1836 or 1837; about which time I had recovered from a long and dismal probation of total blindness. If you will be kind enough to look at the twenty-sixth chapter of "Nicholas Nickleby," you will find, in about a dozen lines, a wonderfully graphic conspectus of the "fast" life which I, as a child, and with absorbed attention, peered into. In the chapter of which I speak the place is a handsome suite of private apartments in Regent Street. The time is three in the afternoon to the dull and plodding, and the first hour of the

morning to the gay and spirited. The persons are Lord Frederick Verisopht and his friend Sir Mulberry Hawk. These distinguished gentlemen, both suffering from acute headache, are reclining listlessly on a couple of sofas, with a table between them, on which are scattered in rich confusion the materials of an untasted breakfast. Newspapers lie strewn about the room; but these, like the meal, are neglected and unnoticed. "These appearances," writes Charles Dickens, "would in themselves have furnished a pretty strong clue to the extent of the debauch of the previous night, even if there had not been other indications of the amusements in which it had been passed. A couple of billiard-balls all mud and dirt, two battered hats, a champagne bottle with a soiled glove twisted round the neck to allow of its being grasped more surely in its capacity of an offensive weapon, a broken cane, a card case without the top, an empty purse, a watch-guard snapped asunder, a handful of silver mingled with fragments of half-smoked cigars and their stale and crumbled ashes; these and many other tokens of riot and disorder hinted very

intelligibly at the nature of last night's gentlemanly frolics."

In this terse but eminently truthful picture there is a most convincing proof of the assimilative power of the genius of Dickens. He could scarcely have actually seen the aristocratic fast life of which he gives his readers so vivid an impression. He divined it. At the time when he was writing "*Nicholas Nickleby*" he was a youthful Benedick, living in modest peace and happy competence with his comely wife; and the "fast" life which he may have witnessed in his bachelor days would be more of the character of that of which we have such delightful glimpses in the medical students' supper-party, and the revelries of the lawyers' clerks at the Magpie and Stump, in "*Pickwick*"; or the convivialities of Mr. Richard Swiveller and his friends, in the "*Old Curiosity Shop*." The boiled leg of mutton and trimmings "swarry" of the Bath footmen may have had a slight foundation in fact; but the incidents and conversation are, I should say, in the main, imaginary. Thackeray had his ideal flunkey and Dickens his; but neither Mr. Jeames

Yellowplush nor Mr. John Smauker is entirely true to nature.

Dickens had certainly never been the boon companion of Lord Frederick Verisopht or Sir Mulberry Hawk. Those worthies moved in a world—and a very bad and profligate world it was—to which the youthful novelist was socially a stranger; but he had read all about their doings in the police reports, and may even have been present as a reporter in those police courts in which the frolicsome gentlemen so frequently made their appearance as defendants. Now it curiously happens that the force of circumstances brought me in daily contact and converse, if not with the Hawks, at least with the Verisophts. My dear mother was something more than a distinguished teacher of Italian singing. She was a gentlewoman of high culture and great intellectual gifts. She knew everybody in society; and her drawing-room was a real *salon*, in which might be found not only the great lords and ladies of the age—not only the leading representatives of literature and art, but all the wits and the beaux, the dandies, and the gay young

fellows of the time. In 1836-7 young gentlemen who habitually drank too much champagne and too much brandy, frequented common gaming-houses, beat the police or got beaten by them and were locked up in the station-house for the night, were only termed "a little wild," and they were *not* ostracised from society. From that society, in these more refined days, I suppose, "Johnnies" and "Chappies" who, like Hans Breitmann's bush-whacker, "raise Cain and break things," are inexorably banished. It happened that we lived in a first floor in the Regent's Quadrant, and, at the time of which I speak, the *entresol* beneath was occupied by Mr. Charles L——, who was, perhaps, the wildest young dog about town of that fiercely wild epoch. He was supremely handsome—handsome even for a period when Count Alfred d'Orsay was the model of male comeliness in London. His apparel was gorgeous even for a time when gentlemen wore two or three coloured and white under-waistcoats and an over-vest of velvet or rich brocade, with a long gold chain meandering over it, and above it a high satin stock adorned by two jewelled breastpins united

by a thin chain of gold—a time when young Mr. Benjamin Disraeli moved in patrician circles in black velvet pantaloons and with ruffles at his wrists. Mr. Charles L—— had run through a couple of fortunes, one of which at least had been squandered over French hazard at Crockford's. He was very well educated, very urbane, nay, almost fascinating in his manner; and he usually came home about four o'clock in the morning either boisterously, lyrically, pugilistically, or maniacally drunk. When he did not return to the *entresol* his manservant used to opine that his master had reached the incapable stage of intoxication, and that he had been conveyed on a stretcher to St. James's Watchhouse, just round the corner; and he would philosophically proceed to wait upon him there with a change of linen and a small silver flask full of brandy. After a few seasons spent in the manner at which I have hinted, Mr. Charles L—— married an Anglo-Indian widow of immense wealth.

On the second floor above us, in Regent Street, a French milliner, whom I may call Madame Frétillon, had her showroom; and especially busy was Madame at that particular

period of the London season when the annual fruit and flower show of the Royal Horticultural Society used to take place in their gardens at Chiswick. One afternoon—it was the day before the show—the Honourable Billy D——, with his friend, Mark B. W.—the last a cousin of the “Mad Marquis”—called to see my mother. I was rather afraid of the Honourable Billy D—— for the reason that, although he was of a most genial and hilarious temperament, and frequently “tipped” me with half-crowns, he was actuated by an intense yearning to remove two of my front teeth in order that I might be able to give a peculiar whistle which he had heard at Stunning Joe Somebody’s hot sausage and gin-punch supper-parties in Buckeridge Street, St. Giles’s. The whistle, I believe, was a signal made by a boy outside Stunning Joe Somebody’s establishment to warn the guests within that the New Police were about to enter the premises; whereupon those of the company who had good reasons for avoiding a personal interview with the constables prudently withdrew, by means of a convenient trap-door, into a cellar communicating with an alley at the rear.

Considering that we were not in the habit of receiving burglars, coiners, and pickpockets at our modest repasts in Regent Street, I cannot exactly discern why the Honourable Billy should have wished to knock two of my front teeth out. He was, in all respects, a remarkable personage—had been in the army; but at the affectionately earnest request of his commanding officers had exchanged from regiment to regiment until he ultimately sold out. Then he became a man about town. It was he who in his chambers at Bruton Street had a museum of articles which he and the gay sparks who associated with him had “conveyed” from the tradesmen who were the proprietors thereof. A museum such as the one of which the Hon. Billy D—— was so proud, and pardonably proud in the estimation of his frisky contemporaries, would be in these days practically an impossibility; since the collector who attempted to bring together such an assemblage of commercial and domestic “curios” would be in perpetual peril of indictment at the Old Bailey or the County of London Sessions for larceny. All the brass plates bearing announcements relative to academies for young ladies,


medical practitioners, agents to the Moon Fire Insurance Office, and professors of the piano-forte; all the knockers, ranging from the fierce lion's head in iron to the diminutive Sphinx in brass; all the bell-pull handles and signboards; all the Original Little Dust Pans; the huge red effigies of human hands which had hung over glovers' shops; the arms brandishing hammers which had been the signs of goldbeaters—had been impudently looted in the public thoroughfares by the Honourable Billy D—— and his "larky" companions. I am not quite certain as to whether he was able to carry out his intention of stealing a turnpike-gate from Ewell to serve as a portal to his collection of street plunder; but he was quite capable of attempting such an heroic act of filibustering. As it was, the predatory laurels which he had won formed a most extraordinary chaplet. It was he who, in conjunction with other companions of the "Mad Marquis," tried to carry off the stone lions which flanked the entrance to a well-known shop in Regent Street; and it was only by an accident that he was not present when a group of tearing young aristocrats, his intimate

friends, achieved their notable exploit, at dead of night, of pouncing upon an unfortunate policeman, binding him hand and foot, painting him pea-green, and lowering him by means of a rope into the area of a mansion at the West End, where he was discovered next morning by the sympathising damsel who answered the milk-man's summons.

In this last-named chivalric adventure the tearing young aristocrats went just a little too far. The Police Commissioners of the day, Colonel Rowan and Mr., afterwards Sir Richard Mayne, took up the case of the outraged "bobby" very seriously indeed. Two of the uproarious young practical jokers were indicted for a misdemeanour; and on conviction were sentenced to a somewhat heavy fine and to a few months' imprisonment in the King's Bench prison. The brief incarceration did not by any means damp the high spirits of these gay young bloods. Why, indeed, should it have done so? As I have had occasion to show when in the preceding chapter I treated of imprisonment for debt in the past, the old Bench, of which not one stone now, happily, remains upon another, was a place where,

with a sufficiency of ready money, life might be made not only tolerable but crapulously luxurious ; and smugglers, libellers, persons committed for contempt of court, and other misdemeanants who had cash at call, could enjoy themselves quite as heartily as the moneyed debtors could do. The dashing young patricians, who were consigned to the Bench for painting the "bobby" pea-green gave dinner-parties to their friends ; drank champagne, and smoked cigars of the best brands ; played racquets, and lounged about in Cashmere shawl dressing-gowns, to the admiration and envy of the more indigent gaol-birds.


That "Mad Marquis," whom I often saw and whom I heard of almost every day, was not half so crazy as people in this generation are apt to imagine that he was. The Marquis of W——, indeed, while gratifying his eccentric whims to the utmost, was not much of a spendthrift. He neither squandered thousands on the turf nor wasted his substance at Crockford's and kindred hells. In fact, although a desperate roysterer, he was rather a frugal than a prodigal peer, and enjoyed an immense amount of what he considered to be fun at a comparatively moderate



outlay of cash. For example, when he and the Hon. Billy D—— called on my mother, as already stated, and at the conclusion of the visit ascended to Madame Frétillon's show-room, and in the absence of the lady assistants, who were at tea, sat down consecutively on twenty-two new bonnets which were to be worn by ladies of distinction in fashionable society at the approaching flower show, Madame, after much weeping and wailing, wringing of her hands, and declaring that she was a ruined woman, was glad to accept a fifty pound note from his lordship and a *douceur* of ten guineas from the Hon. Billy D—— as a solatium for the injuries which her wares had suffered.

And if she *did* keep her assistants at work till five o'clock the next morning to repair the damage done, there was in those happy-go-lucky days no troublesome Government inspector to spy out the matter and summon her to a police-court for an infraction of the Factories and Workshops Acts. Then again, when the Marquis himself was arraigned at Marlborough Street for furiously driving his tilbury through a crowded thoroughfare, and endeavoured to bring his

horse into court as a witness for the defence, not much more harm was done to his purse than the disbursement of a few half-sovereigns among the police who prevented the ingress of the noble steed to the magisterial presence; and furthermore, when the droll idea caught his lordship's fancy of driving about with a wolf chained underneath his dog-cart, nobody came to grief save the wolf, which managed, poor brute, to strangle itself in its bonds. Another frolic, of a somewhat more expensive nature, was the purchase one night from a publican in the Haymarket of a cask of gin, which his lordship caused to be brought into the street, and from which he regaled in half-pint measures the cabmen, the pickpockets, the beggars, and the wantons who then infested that now highly-respectable thoroughfare. We all know that the "Mad Marquis" abandoned all his vagaries ere he had reached middle life and settled down on the paternal estates, and in due course came to be known as an exemplary landlord and a model husband.

 No picture, however slight, of the "fast" life of the past, as I studied it in my youth, would

be complete without some reference to the habit of gambling which prevailed in aristocratic and upper-middle class society in London at the beginning of the Victorian era. I have mentioned that we resided, a little more than half a century since, in Regent Street; and, indeed, I think my mother, between 1835 and 1845, must have occupied from time to time at least a dozen different first floors in the agreeable avenue built by Nash, Prince of Architects, between the Piccadilly and the Oxford Circuses; our permanent home being all the while at Brighton. Regent Street we only inhabited as birds of passage during the season. The particular first floor in the *entresol* of which lived the bibulous Mr. L——, and on the second floor of which the Marquis and the Hon. Billy D—— sat on the Horticultural Show bonnets, was in a house with a common gambling-hell on one side and a private and most select place for gaming on the other. The private Inferno was merely the small but very handsomely-furnished back-parlour of a shop, in which a plump and swarthy widow lady—a Madame Une Telle,

whose black eyes could flash almost as brightly as her abundant diamonds did—sold cigars, and those, too, of the very finest brands of Havana tobacco, to the nobility and gentry. She had only one assistant, a sturdy, middle-aged, clean-shaven, pock-marked, closely-cropped, square-headed, broad-chested man, with a broken nose, who was dressed very plainly, but neatly, and was a model of civility and alacrity in serving customers.

How it came about I know not; but I harboured in my boyish mind a secret persuasion that the clean-shaven assistant in the cigar shop had once been a member of the "ring." He at once became in my eyes a hero of romance; and I drew him innumerable times in all kinds of pugilistic attitudes—stripped to the waist, girt with a blue Belcher handkerchief, and with shorts and white cotton stockings, terminating in ankle-jacks. Why Madame Une Telle should have hired him from the "ring" and made him her shopman I cannot authoritatively say. Possibly he may have been found useful very late at night as a "chucker-out," not of Madame's own clients,

but of unprivileged persons in a questionable state of sobriety, who might have sought during the small hours to obtain admission to the little back-parlour where, so I was told, many thousands of pounds sterling were lost in the course of every year. The place was, in fact, a kind of tiny chapel-of-ease to Crockford's, in St. James's Street; and from that palatial gambling den the greatest noblemen and gentlemen in England, when they were tired of calling "mains," would come down to Madame Une Telle to chat, and smoke, and eventually adjourn to the back parlour, where, with the refreshments of champagne, brandy and water, broiled bones, and anchovy toast, they would fall to gambling again and keep the dice clacking merrily until four or five or six in the morning. The whole neighbourhood on both sides of the Quadrant was spotted, and plentifully spotted too, with gambling-houses, which on our side spread through Air Street into Piccadilly, and then down St. James's Street; while on the opposite side the gambling-house pestilence reached as far as Golden Square.

To the east there were numerous *tripots* in

Prince's Street, and Cranborne Alley, and Leicester Square; but these were of a lower and altogether more repulsive type than the showy Infernos of Regent Street and St. James's. The lower-class dens were known as "silver hells," for the reason that stakes as low as half-a-crown were accepted; and so late as 1847 or 1848 there was—at least I have a dim impression of its existence—a very shady gambling house, indeed, close to Leicester Square, and which was called "The Little Nick." It may seem almost incredible, but it is nevertheless the fact, that in a notorious weekly journal, published at the period of which I am speaking, there appeared regularly every week a couple of columns with the attractive heading of "Pandemonium;" and therein the readers of the journal in question were kept duly *au courant* with the edifying proceedings at the most noted gaming-houses of the time, the professional frequenters of which were known, in the slang of the epochs, as "Greeks." The "Greek" of half a century since was a type that may be said to have completely disappeared in these days. He was something superior to a "welsher," and

something inferior to a promoter of bogus companies and "wild cat" proprietary clubs. Now and again, perhaps, a shadow faintly resembling his ghost may be seen hanging about the vestibule of the Casino at Monte Carlo; but the authorities of the Hades on the Riviera are well aware of the phantom "Greek's" character, and scrupulously exclude him from the interior of the Casino itself.

In England the gaming-house "Greek" very frequently dubbed himself a captain; and in some few instances, possibly, he may have held a subaltern's commission in that celebrated British Auxiliary Legion commanded by General Sir de Lacy Evans, which, with the authority of the Reform Parliament, was sent out to Spain in the interests of Queen Christina and her daughter, Queen Isabella, to fight the partisans of Don Carlos. The British auxiliaries were very irregularly paid, if they were paid at all, by the Spanish Government. In my boyhood it was by no means uncommon to see deplorable creatures in ragged scarlet jackets, proclaiming their former connection with the British Legion, sweeping crossings or begging in the streets of

London. The greater number, however, of the gambling-house "Greeks" were the merest of copper captains, who were employed as touts or "bonnets" to inveigle foolish or half-intoxicated gentlemen into common gaming-houses, where they could be swindled out of their money at hazard, faro, or roulette.

An exceptionally infamous "Greek" of the generation just preceding that of which I am speaking was the notorious Jack Thurtell, who in his youth had actually been an officer in the army, but who after the peace had taken to betting on horse-races and prize fights, and to cheating the persons who were simple enough to play cards with him. His victim, Mr. Weare, who "lived in Lyon's Inn," was, in point of morals, not very much above the status of the villain who murdered him. Weare, in short, was a professional gamester, and he was led to join in the expedition which ended so fatally for him by a story trumped up by Thurtell and his confederates that there was a "pigeon" to be plucked somewhere out of town. The poor wretch himself was the "pigeon." The mischief effected by

these common gaming houses with their Greek "bonnets" and touts was almost immeasurable. Midnight gambling sapped the very vitals, economically speaking, of the community, and directly and indirectly led to innumerable tragedies.

It is, perhaps, a fact known to very few save systematic students of old newspapers that the remote cause of the ruin and the dreadful end of Arthur Thistlewood, the chief of the Cato Street conspirators, who, with their leader, were hanged and beheaded before the Debtors' Door, Newgate, in 1820, was a misadventure which he met with in a gaming house. Thistlewood was the son of a country gentleman of fair estate. When quite a young man he was sent up to London with a very large sum of money—reaching four figures, if I remember aright—in his possession, to make some investment on behalf of a relative. He had this money about him in bank notes; when, having dined much too copiously at a tavern, he was enticed by some improvised acquaintance of the "Greek" order to try his luck in a gambling house. There he was stripped of every farthing of the

money he had about him. He made, subsequently, some ineffectual attempt to show that the play had been unfair, and to recover some portion of his losses ; but the wretched mishap in the gaming-house led, step by step, to his utter destruction, and he became an impoverished desperado, who drifted first into sedition, and then into treason, very possibly because he had become altogether a social leper and pariah.

It was impossible that the evils at which I have briefly glanced could be allowed to go on unchecked for any considerable time after the accession of the young Queen, and the presence by her side of the Prince Consort, whose dignified, decorous, and blameless character became at once a model to all English gentlemen. Even the great Crockford's felt the influence of the new standard of morals which had been set up at the British Court. The frequenters of the gambling palace in Pall Mall gradually dwindled away ; and not very long after the death in debt and discredit of one of the most brilliant of Crockford's circle—Theodore Hook—the club was disestablished for ever.

The hour of doom for the common gaming-houses now rapidly approached, and the complete breaking up of these "hells" was in a very great measure the work of an exceptionally energetic and resourceful superintendent of police named Beresford, who, with strong contingents of constables, successively and successfully raided every one of the West End dens. Doors lined with sheet-iron; bolts, bars, and chains; contrivances by which the dice, rakes, and cards could be thrown down a pipe connecting with the sewer, and an ingenious device by means of which a roulette-wheel could be elevated by cords and pulleys and made to fit into the disc of the overhanging chandelier, were all tried by the gambling-house proprietors. But their game was up for good; and Inspector Beresford and his merry men cleaned out the hell-keepers, their touts, and their "bonnets" quite as efficaciously as the rascals themselves had cleaned out innumerable dupes. Many of the gambling house proprietors had realised handsome fortunes; and in after life I came casually across a few of them who, like the Shums in 'Thackeray's story—after Mr. Shum had retired from the crossing-sweeping

business—passed for “quite respectable people.” Joe Martingale, if I remember aright, dabbled in antique plate ; and Fred Elbowshake cultivated a taste for the Old Masters.

It would be an insult to the common-sense of my readers were I to attempt to contend that illegal gambling is not to some extent prevalent in the metropolis at the present moment ; yet I do maintain that we have in our midst, nowadays, no state of society even remotely approximating to that which existed when Crockford’s had twenty tributaries, little less palatial than itself, in the parish of St. James alone, and when Regent Street and its vicinity literally swarmed with common and private “hells.”

The next phase of “fastness” which I not only witnessed but was intimately concerned with may have ascribed to it the date of 1847 or 1848 ; and such “fastness” obtained, I should say, until the passing of the last Licensing Act in 1874, which definitively swept away those remarkable institutions “the night houses” of the Haymarket and its immediate neighbourhood. The Haymarket ! As I sit

in a quiet study by the side of the sea, the word as it falls from my pen is as the sound of a trumpet, long hushed, but which for a moment has a strange clangour in mine ear. The Haymarket! I drive by it sometimes late at night coming home from the play or from dining out. The Haymarket of the present, as I have already hinted, is a thoroughly respectable, well-behaved, and prosperous business thoroughfare; and in the day-time, if I take a walk down the well-remembered street, I am never tired of admiring the handsomeness of the buildings and the display of articles of all kinds in the spacious and well-appointed shops.

But the Haymarket of other days! From eleven p.m. to three and four a.m. all the year round, and Sundays scarcely excepted, the Haymarket was a wild scene of howling, yelling, shrieking carousal and riot. Somewhere on the site of the present Criterion Restaurant there was a succursal to the Haymarket in a horrible haunt of dissipation called "The Piccadilly Saloon," where rowdy people of both sexes danced, drank, smoked, and fought to their own content and to the

delight, I should say, of the Devil who was watching them from the gallery above. The place was rather handsomely decorated, nor were the liquors adulterated; but it was impossible to prevent disorder in a resort the very foundations of which were laid in defiance of all order and decency; and the consequence was that the Piccadilly Saloon became a convertible term for permanent brawling, the upshot of which went, occasionally, far beyond the battering of heads and the blackening of eyes. More than one of the fatal duels which began to shock society at the beginning of her Majesty's reign were the direct outcome of a row at "The Pic." Bob Somebody's, in the Haymarket itself, was another resort of night-birds, quite as dissipated as "The Pic," but not half so noisy; the proprietor being, apart from the equivocal nature of his business, a really worthy fellow, who exercised some kind of selection and control with respect to the guests, male or female, whom he admitted to his establishment. It was in Panton Street, however—Panton Street now so thoroughly irreproachable from a moral point of view—that the night houses did most

thickly congregate. They might be covered, in horse-racing phrase, by a pocket handkerchief, so closely did they pullulate together; and most of them bore the name of the gaily-dressed *dame de comptoir* who presided over the revels. "Sally" this, "Nellie" that, "Kate" another, and "Jenny" yet another—these were the dames who, rouged and powdered and bedizened in jewels, leered and coquetted with the favourite frequenters of these halls of dazzling light.

The champagne was bad and infamously dear; the spirits were worse; the cigars were vile, and the company was mixed: that is to say, noblemen and Guardsmen rubbed shoulders with rackety stockbrokers and business men, and young fellows from the country burning to gain an insight into London life after dark. The ladies were splendidly dressed; and, until they had taken too much of the bad champagne, they usually behaved themselves. The night-houses were not altogether indiscriminately opened to the public. You had to knock for admission: and before ingress was conceded to you a Judas-wicket or trap was

opened in the portal, and you were scrutinised by a janitor inside: the normal qualification which in his eyes entitled a candidate to be inducted into the gay scene being that he should be well dressed, and that he should not be either in an uproarious or a helpless condition of intoxication. These night-houses had been in existence for some years with the full cognisance of the police, but without suffering any interference from the authorities; but at last public opinion having begun, through the agency of the press, to wake up in the matter, steps were taken to overhaul the unlicensed houses of the Haymarket and Panton Street, and ascertain something definite as to the character of the festivities common there—festivities which the respectable shopkeepers of the neighbourhood had come to regard as a scandal and a nuisance.

A system was introduced of paying police visits at irregular intervals during the night to the more notorious of the “Sally,” “Jenny,” “Kate,” and “Nellie” places of nightly resort. The lady and gentlemen revellers would be enjoying themselves with delightful hilarity,

say at half-past two in the morning; when a knock of authority would be heard at the outer portal, and the janitor would enter the room with well-affected consternation, and inform the beauteous *dame de comptoir* that the "bobbies was come." "Admit them at once," was the stereotyped answer of the lovely and, for the nonce, law-abiding female. The janitor took a minute or so to open the heavy door; and meanwhile the waiters, who were in the joke, carefully removed every lady and gentleman's glass of champagne or tumbler of aerated water with something in it, and concealed these Bacchanalian *pièces de conviction* behind the bar.

Then, with solemn march and stern mien, an inspector of police, accompanied by a sergeant, made his appearance, to find only a large number of well-dressed gentlemen chatting and smoking, and an equally large number of ladies, attired in the highest style of fashion, and smiling around with an expression of innocence quite enchanting to behold. The inspector produced a note-book from his pocket and wrote something down. Whether it was

the name of the house or the titles of some of the noble lords present, or a verse of the latest comic song, or the Slavonic alphabet, it did not matter much : the whole proceedings being, as the proprietor and the guests knew well enough, and the police authorities knew even better, an egregious and preposterous farce. The attendant sergeant did little more than cough behind his right hand in a vaguely ominous and mysterious manner. Then the police would retire, and the revels would begin again ; only, through some curious phenomenon, it was always found that the wines and liquors which had formerly sparkled in tumblers and glasses had unaccountably disappeared during the time of the invasion of the "bobbies." Perhaps there was a night-house cat which drank up all that was potable.

CHAPTER XIII.

PANTOMIMES PAST AND PRESENT.

A Theological Professor with a Taste for Horse-racing—An Attempt to Recall Bygone Christmases—Boxing Day, 1835—Gruesome Curtain Raisers on Pantomime Nights—The Police in Early Days—Primitive Pantomime Tricks—A Criticism: "Few Tricks, Fewer Thumps, a Singular Lack of Bumps"—The Covent Garden Pantomime in 1820—*Za-Ze-Zi-Zo-Zoo*: Animated Dominoes—*Pilules du Diable* in 1839: A Run of a Thousand Nights—The Author Nicknamed—*Harlequin Billy Taylor* at the Princess's in 1851—A Feline Comedy—A Change of rôle.

I ONCE enjoyed the friendship of a professor of theology in a German university who, at a moment's notice, could enumerate all the successive winners of the Derby, from Diomed to Blair Athol. He had never been in England, and never evinced any admiration or liking for the noble sport of racing; thus, why it should have occurred to him to learn the names of so many famous English racehorses by heart, passes my comprehension. Still, as Mr. Carlyle has somewhere asked, "A learned man, shall he not be learned?" For aught I know to the contrary, the Teutonic sage with whom I had the

honour to be acquainted may have been quite as well versed in the *Acta Sanctorum*, the *Rig Veda*, and the *Belfast Town and Country Almanack* as in the *English Racing Calendar*. Recalling, however, the strange effort of memory made by the enumerator of the Derby winners, I have often wondered how many mature persons of average intelligence and with fairly retentive memories there are who, at call and without reference to their diaries, could be able to tell you how they had passed all their Christmas Days from, say, the age of twelve to sixty. I attempted the task once myself, but very soon gave it up in despair; since I found a hiatus between a certain Christmas spent in a sick-room, and another, many years afterwards, enjoyed with the hardest of hard work in the painting-room of a London theatre; and then, after a tolerably well-remembered procession of years, came yet another disastrous blank between a Christmas Day passed at Montreal, in Canada, and one on board a steamer in Bass's Straits voyaging from Launceston to Sydney.

These failures to summon up in their proper sequence the Christmases of the bygone may

have been partly due to the fact that many of my Christmas Days in early life were strictly domestic ones, and that in middle-class society one Christmas Day with its family dinner as intimately resembles the Christmas Day preceding it as the one following it, just as, to most people who are not shepherds, one sheep in a flock resembles his forty or his four hundred fellow-muttons. Another reason, possibly, is that I have often had to spend a Christmas Day under anything but festive circumstances, and that occasionally I have designedly thought as little about the convivial aspect of the season as I possibly could, there having occurred considerable difficulty in the way either of becoming the host or a guest at a Christmas dinner at all.

Recognising, therefore, the practical impossibility of keeping an accurate account of how many times one has regaled on roast turkey, sirloin of beef, plum pudding, and mince pies, as against the Christmas Days when one was glad to get a sham Christmas dinner at an hotel or restaurant in some foreign country, and those other Christmases when one was sick or sorry and had no mind for feasting at all; or when, with every

wish to be joyous, one was fain to dine with Duke Humphrey, I am trying as well as I can in this chapter to conjure up the memories of a few of the Christmas pantomimes which I have witnessed. There need be no wearisome beating about the bush in this matter ; it will be better to plunge, like Homer, into the midst of things ; and sitting in a cosy study at Brighton on Christmas Eve, 1893, my memory flies back straight as an arrow from a Tartar's bow to Boxing Day, 1835. I was at that period a small boy with a large head, and a great yearning for the acquaintance of giants and dwarfs and fairies and elves ; and for three weeks before Boxing Day that head was full of the most intoxicating visions of the coming delights of the Christmas pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, to which my mother had promised that I should be taken on the evening of Dec. 26th, provided always that the weather was favourable, and, in particular, that it did not rain.

Fortunately for my Boxing Day felicity, we had a very cold Yule-tide ; and it was on a fine frosty evening that, with an elder sister and a

group of young friends as small as I, I found myself in a box at the theatre, awaiting with the most intense anxiety the rising of the green curtain on the long yearned-for pantomime. I do not retain the slightest idea of the nature of the piece which preceded the Christmas entertainment. In those days it was customary to have as a first piece on Boxing Night a dreadfully gloomy tragedy, called *George Barnwell*. In this harrowing production was told the story of the dissolute London apprentice who, lured to crime by the artifices of an objectionable female named Millwood, murdered his uncle, a highly respectable and affluent old gentleman—in the pawnbroking line, I believe; although, according to some authorities, the uncle thus done to death by his naughty kinsman was a rich grazier at Ludlow. I am inclined to think that the play at Brighton was *Barnwell* inasmuch as I have just one solitary recollection of a tall young lady, highly rouged, who wore an immense hat and feathers. Possibly, this was the abandoned Sarah Millwood; although I am not prepared to say that the curtain-raiser was not Kotzebue's depressing drama of *The*

Stranger; and the tall young lady with the rouged cheeks and the huge hat and feathers the repentant Mrs. Haller. It does not matter much at this time of writing, since Lillo's gloomy but exemplary tragedy is almost forgotten, and Kotzebue's mawkish drama, translated into stilted English, is very rarely played.

Nor, again, can I give any distinct information as to the plot, scenery, or characters in the "opening" of the Christmas novelty itself. The pantomime may have been called *The Babes in the Wood*; or *Hop o' My Thumb*; or *The Forty Thieves*; or *Cherry and Fairstar*; or *Cock Robin*. All I know is, that to the extravaganza, whatever it may have been, its official title was prefixed—the glorious name of Harlequin—and that suffixed to it was the equally glorious one of the Fairy Somebody. I do not suppose that the "opening" was very spectacular; but we children in the private box, who made so much noise by clapping our hands and laughing so riotously that our buttons, like Peggotty's in "David Copperfield," may have flown off our skeleton suits, and the box-keeper was obliged to open the door and request my sister to keep

us—I think he called us “young warmints”—quiet, found quite enough spectacle and to spare in the “tricks” and transformations of the “comic business.”

The “tricks,” I daresay, were simple and silly enough; but children, who can be amused and even interested to the stage of fascination, and by the most artless of means, do not stand in need of any very elaborate thaumaturgical delusions. A very plain little foundation of glamour is enough for them; and imagination supplies the rest. There is no spectacle in “Punch and Judy”; and when do little ones, or even grown-up people, tire of beholding that historic *al fresco* drama, and shrieking with merriment over the misdeeds of an abandoned ruffian and profligate who murders his devoted wife, and, after cheating the gallows and hanging Jack Ketch himself, is not afraid to confront even the Enemy of Mankind?

The “trick” in the “comic business” at the Brighton pantomime which I can most distinctly remember was the metamorphosis of a policeman into a lobster. The “force” were not very popular in 1835. They had

been but recently established and were contemptuously halloaed at by small boys in the street as "bobbies," "peelers," and "crushers." Nor in the way of uniform were they very lovely to look upon; since, instead of neat blue tunics and spruce helmets, they were arrayed in absurdly-cut swallow-tail coats, and wore chimney-pot hats, crowned and bound down the sides with black leather. In the Brighton pantomime Clown and Pantaloon between them captured a policeman and proceeded to boil him in a cauldron, from which they dragged him out turned in hue to a bright scarlet: the transformation having been effected by simply covering him with a veil of red gauze. There was another trick, too, of Harlequin being fired out of a mortar and simultaneously making his appearance in a box on the upper tier.

Of course there were two Harlequins made use of to carry out this not very occult delusion; but to us it was at once delicious and marvellous. Then, again, there was a gentleman who tried to read a book by the light of a candle placed on a table; but the candle, table and all slowly rose from the

stage close up to the arch of the proscenium. Then it as slowly descended, and the gentleman opened his book again; whereupon he, his volume and his chair to boot, all gravely rose nearly to the altitude of the "flies." I saw the self-same and venerable trick performed in the year 1856 in the "comic business" of a grand ballet at the Royal Opera House at Berlin; and very possibly that identical trick was a common one in the Roman theatres of antiquity. As it happens, I chanced to be turning, the other day, over a file of newspapers for 1835, and in one of their number the writer, who criticised the Covent Garden pantomime, began by remarking that "the genius of this kind of entertainment was at a rapid decline." "There is no use," continued the critic, "in denying it. These fine scenes and splendid 'effects' have played the very deuce. Harlequin thinks it unnecessary to exert himself; he is bewildered by visions and panoramas, and has become anything but what he ought to be. What wonder, then, that degeneracy has also affected the Columbine, and that she, the tender, frightened little heart, no longer runs

hither and thither for protection and love, but assures herself on her own account, and is not afraid to rebuke the advances of gouty old aristocrats, as though she were sixty years of age instead of sixteen. That profligate wag, the Clown, no longer picks pockets with a gusto, nor looks those outrageous lies, nor laughs as though he would shake his shoulders off. He merely makes respectable summersaults, and hopes that people will laugh at him."

Furthermore, the censor of the Covent Garden pantomime, the name of which he even disdains to give, complains that the spectacle included "few tricks, fewer thumps, a singular lack of bumps, and little or no mirthful enjoyment." He sneered, too, at what was then the modern joke of the squeaking pig, and denounces "allegories of gin-palaces starting suddenly out of dissipation, outrage, poverty, and disease." Still he has a good word to say for a device in which the "Largest Turkey in Europe is being rescued from the hug of a Russian Bear" by a broadside from an admirably modelled representation of H.M.S. *Britannia*. Looking through journalistic strictures on pantomimes between 1835 and

1850, one finds over and over again the same complaint of the sad degeneracy of these once mirthful Christmas spectacles, and bitter lamentations over the evanishment of the days of Joey Grimaldi in *Mother Goose*. That renowned entertainment, which is said to have been the first pantomime ever seen by Lord Eldon, and which his lordship subsequently witnessed eleven times in succession, I have never read; but I have before me a copy of a pantomime called *Harlequin and Friar Bacon; or, The Brazen Head*, performed at Covent Garden Theatre on Boxing Night, 1820. The Pantaloon was the famous Barnes; Miles, Friar Bacon's servant, afterwards Clown, was played by the great "Joey" himself; and Fribble, the Page, afterwards Dandy Lover, was impersonated by the younger Grimaldi, whose wretched career and miserable end are so forcibly narrated in the "Life of Joseph Grimaldi," edited by Charles Dickens.

That interesting work was illustrated by George Cruikshank, and, by an odd coincidence, the frontispiece of my copy of *Harlequin Friar Bacon* is a portrait of the original "Joey," etched by Isaac Robert Cruikshank, George's father.

The unrivalled clown is represented in the act of opening a number of oysters from a barrel; and the very way in which he leers at the bivalves and the manner in which he brandishes an exaggerated oyster-knife, at once suffices to convince you that the man had inherited from his Italian father the most subtle of mimetic powers. As to the "opening" of *Friar Bacon*, it is about as stupid a production as it is possible to imagine; while the "comic business" comprises scenes of the "West Cliff, Brighton," the "Elephant and Castle," the "Outside of a Lodging House and Snuff Shop," the "Peacock, at Islington," "Donnybrook Fair," "Dublin Bay," and a grand transformation scene of the "Temple of the Brazen Head," with plenty of red and blue fire as a wind up, you may be sure.

I may have seen a Christmas pantomime or two in London between 1835 and 1838; but I confess that I have but a very cloudy remembrance of them, principally, I think, because my capacity of astonishment and delight were absorbed by a wonderful spectacle played, I think, at Drury Lane, and entitled, *Za-Ze-Zi-Zo-Zoo*, in which there was an animated game

of dominoes, about one of the funniest stage devices that I ever saw. The animated dominoes, of course, afterwards joined in a game of leap-frog, which culminated in a chaotic revel, in which Double Blank took a flying leap over the back of Double Six.

But now I come to a pantomime which, although I first saw it fifty-three years ago, is distinctly and still delightfully engraved on my mind. In 1839 I was a boy at school at Paris; and one summer Sunday evening, having my *exeat*, or "pass," from college in my pocket, I was allowed, with my sister, who was finishing her education in the French capital, to visit, under matronly escort, Franconi's Winter Circus, high up on the Boulevards towards the Place de la Bastille, at which theatre a wonderful pantomime *féerie* called *Les Pilules du Diable* was just then sending all Paris wild with excitement. The piece was in five acts; the authors were MM. Anicet-Bourgeois, Laloue, and Laurent; and it was first produced in February. It was in July that I saw it, and it had been running ever since. Its run amounted altogether to a

thousand nights. The transformations in the *Pilules du Diable* seemed to be innumerable; although the plot was an exceedingly simple one, being founded on the misadventures of an old apothecary and his son-in-law, who through the five acts were continually searching for the heroine, who had been carried off by a dissipated personage, by the name of Babylas; but it was the transformations that excited our wonder, and threw us into transports of joy.

Men were changed into turkeys, children into cats, wretched hovels into palaces blazing with gold and jewels; while wooden razors which hung as signs over barbers' shops opened of their own accord to cut off the heads of passers-by. An Italian image-boy came on the stage with a tray of plaster casts on his head; and one Magloire, who was a kind of clown, stole the images and replaced them with the severed heads which he had picked up. The Italian image-boy, suspecting naught, went on his way, but was pursued by a crowd, which, to defend himself, he pelted with the heads on his tray. A man was run over by a locomotive engine—then an almost entire

novelty in France; his body was cut to pieces and magically put together again. A quack-salver brought forward a head of wood, and by the aid of a new pomatum made the hair, the beard, and the moustaches grow. Then there were the old tricks of the chairs and table which played at hide and seek; of the beds which turned into baths of iced water, and of a cotton factory which changes into a madhouse of four storeys, out of every window of which a lunatic with a tall white night-cap popped his head.

If Magloire halted in front of a cabaret and ordered a bottle of wine, the sign of the inn, "Le More Couronné," became animated, jumped on to the table and emptied his glass; while gigantic frogs issued from a neighbouring pool and carried off the bottle. When he tried to dine at a cook shop, roast pigeons flew up from the dish and into the gaping mouth of a giant painted on the wall; raised pies burst asunder and disclosed fantastic animals making astounding grimaces. These and five hundred extravagances made the *Pilules du Diable* a world-famous pantomime; and many of the tricks which were really original have long since

become stock devices in modern comic business. This wondrous pantomime was revived in 1874 in Paris, at the great theatre of the Châtelet, but the management unwisely thought that the old rough-and-tumble tricks and grotesque transformations were no longer up to date, or at least that it was necessary to supplement them by more-spectacle, more tinsel and foil paper and coloured fires, and especially by many more pairs of feminine legs. The *Pilules du Diable* gained in splendour, but lost in fun; nor was the revival, on the whole, a long-continued success. It did not, at least, achieve the triumph which was the lot of *Peau d'Âne*, of *La Biche au Bois*, and especially of the famous *Pied de Mouton*.

I have had a good deal to do in my working time with pantomimes. In 1846 at the old Princess's Theatre, Mr. John Medex Maddox being the lessee and manager thereof, I was employed as an assistant in the painting-room, as I have mentioned in the first chapter. I forget the name of the grand Christmas pantomime produced in the winter of the year just named, but I know that I worked very hard in

connection with it. One of the comic scenes was a tableau of the Arctic regions, which was metamorphosed into a kitchen full of blazing fireplaces and cooks in white jerkins and caps. All the kitchen utensils, which were projected on a fiery background, had to cast the very deepest of shadows, which it was my business to delineate ; and I used up so many pots of sable colour in painting these shadows that I was known among my colleagues as the "gentleman in black." I likewise helped to model all the pantomime masks, and to paint and gild the "properties"—technical training which stood me in very good stead many years afterwards, when I was examined as a witness in the great Belt libel case, and was asked somewhat insolently by one of the counsel whether I knew anything practically about the plastic modelling with regard to which I was being examined. I told the learned gentleman that I could model heads well enough, and would be charmed to model his—wig and all—if he liked.

When I left the Princess's and Mr. Maddox, I drifted into journalism in a small way, but I had not lost my love for Clown, Pantaloon,

and their funniments; and about 1848, Mr. Alfred Bunn being lessee and manager of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, I designed the masks and costumes for a pantomime called, I think, "Harlequin Hogarth." Again, in 1851, the Princess's having passed out of the hands of Mr. Maddox and into those of Mr. Charles Kean, for that excellent actor and accomplished gentleman I wrote, in conjunction with a brother long since deceased and Mr. George Ellis, the stage manager of the theatre, the opening of a pantomime called *Harlequin Billy Taylor*. Our scene painters were the Grieves; our Clown was the admirable Flexmore; our Pantaloon a very old pantomimic hand, Paulo; our Columbine Miss Carlotta Leclercq; and a marvellously pretty little girl called Kate Terry played the figure-head of a mimic man-of-war, with a crew of small children dressed as tars, who sang "Rule Britannia," in the midst of coloured fires, while the bowsprit slowly descended to the level of the stage, and the charming little figure-head stepped forth as a fairy all white muslin and spangles, waved her tinsel wand, and brought about the Grand Transformation, followed by the "rally"

and the comic business, in which one scene was the work of my brother and myself.

It was the outside of a lodging-house by moonlight. Of course, Clown and Pantaloon were "all over the place" with warming-pans and night-lights and other adjuncts for fun; and the scene wound up with a great concert of "practical" cats on the roof, whose diabolical moll-rowings still ring in my ears. Charles Kean, who was a dry humorist, took great interest in this feline comedy; and one day at rehearsal, while he was sitting at the back of the pit watching the scene, he called out to Mrs. Charles Kean, who was a splendid stage manageress, "Ellen, there's a large tom cat close to the chimney, and he does not cock his tail correctly; take him away and let me have another cat with a larger tail."

I had nothing more to do with pantomimes until 1856, when during the disastrous management of Professor Anderson, the "Wizard of the North," at Covent Garden, soon afterwards to be destroyed by fire, I assisted the stage director, Mr. Augustus Harris—the father of Sir Augustus, the present lessee of the two

national theatres—in writing the rhymed-
“book” of a pantomime called *Harlequin King Henry VIII.; or, The Field of the Cloth of Gold*. Two years afterwards a new and very different field of pantomimic industry was opened to me. It became my duty to write the annual Boxing Night article on the Drury Lane pantomime for the *Daily Telegraph*; and in the course of four-and-thirty years, allowing for occasional absence in foreign parts, I suppose that I have written some twenty yearly pantomime critiques.

CHAPTER XIV.

OPERAS REMEMBERED.

Maria di Rohan in 1847—A Voice “like melted Butter”—Alboni—*Artaxerxes*—Musical Criticism in 1836—*The Lord of the Manor*—*Tom Thumb*—*The Quaker*—*Love in a Village*—*Guy Mannering*—*Rob Roy*—*The Antiquary*—John Barnet, Michael Balfe, and Vincent Wallace.

ONE bright summer evening, in the year 1847, it occurred to me, after I had been dining at the Garrick’s Head Hotel, in Bow Street, Covent Garden—a tavern which has long since disappeared—that I had in my pocket a stall for the instant night’s performance at the Royal Italian Opera—clearly not the existing palatial theatre, but the partially reconstructed and redecorated Covent Garden: a transformation from the old, or Kemble structure, effected by an Italian architect named Albano, and which was totally destroyed by fire after a masquerade given by Professor Anderson, in the year 1856. The opera, as I learned from the notice-board under the portico, was *Maria di Rohan*, a production which, I take it, is scarcely very

popular with modern opera-goers. I lived in Salisbury Street, in the Strand; and, after debating for awhile whether I should see *Maria di Rohan*, or take a ramble through the streets, I elected the former course, hurried home, dressed, and in due time found myself in the splendid theatre, then under the management either of Mr. Beale or of Mr. Delafield.

The opera had already commenced; and just as I took my seat there walked on to the stage a young lady in male attire of the Louis Treize or early Louis Quatorze period. It was a "front" scene, and she had the whole of the space behind the footlights and the canvas "flat" to herself. So soon as she began to sing, I remembered that I had seen her only a very short time before, at the opening of the Royal Italian Opera, in the opera of *Semiramide*, in which magnificent work she sustained the part of Arsace. I was listening to a voice of wonderful compass, including, so far as my ear taught me, notes far beyond the reach of the ordinary contralto. My next-door neighbour in the stalls, who, from his face and mien, I conjectured to be an officer in the

Guards, expressed his opinion touching the delightful songstress with a terseness and lucidity which far surpassed my more technical appreciation. He remarked that the young lady's voice was "like melted butter—by Jove!"

It certainly was one of the richest, most unctuous, and yet vigorous voices I had ever listened to. The song she sang was of a cavalier—herself—who, not wishing to be idle, paid for two entire months assiduous court to a fair and noble lady, who, however, vouchsafed such scant attention to his sighs and entreaties, that he might as well have tried to propitiate a rock. There was a refrain to the ditty, in which the disappointed swain expressed his opinion that, after all, austere beauties of the Lucretian type were rarely found. The enchanting lyric and the more enchanting singer were quite enough for me. I wanted no more of *Maria di Rohan* that summer evening, so I hied me home, opened my paint-box, and made a sketch, in water-colours, of the handsome young lady in boy's clothes, with a voice, as the Guardsman put it, "like melted butter."

Only the other day, rummaging among

old-time papers in the drawers of a bureau, and judiciously burning a large proportion of the documents, I came across a water-colour drawing of a young lady in boy's clothes—a handsome brunette, somewhat inclined to *embonpoint*. She was clad in a *pourpoint* and *hauts de chausses* of black velvet, with black silk hose and shoes with rosettes. She had a deep, falling-collar of point lace and ample lawn sleeves and lace ruffles; while in one hand she carried a slouched hat with sable plumes. Underneath I found three lines in Italian :

“ Al Giudicar,
Da quel che par,
Son le Lucrezie rare a trovar ! ”

The writing was lamentably faded, and the first word was so blurred and indistinct that I could not precisely make out whether it was “ Al ” or “ Non. ” The paper, too, was stained and crumpled; and in the greys, with which I had touched up the black velvet costume and the plumes, I had incautiously mingled white lead instead of Chinese white. The lead had oxidised, and, where there should have been grey touches,

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Only the other day, rummaging among

both English and Italian, before the work, of which Hullah was the composer and Dickens the writer of the libretto, was produced. I should say that a very large number of the lyrical productions to which I intend to call brief attention are at the present day scarcely known, even by name, to the great majority of patrons of the lyric stage. For example, in October, 1837, I saw at the St. James's, Dr. Arne's opera of *Artaxerxes*. John Braham, then nearly sixty-two, but still in splendid form, as a tenor equally vigorous and mellifluous, was Artabanes, and Mr. Bennett, of Covent Garden, Arbaces. The Mandane of the evening was a *débutante*, Miss Rainforth, who was at once acknowledged as a peeress of the two then most conspicuous *prime donne* of English opera, Miss Shirreff and Miss Romer.


In *Artaxerxes* the contralto part was played by Miss Julia Smith, but I am not ashamed to confess that I have but a very indistinct remembrance of Miss Julia Smith's vocalisation, or, indeed, of her individuality, save that she was young and good-looking and inclined to plumpness, and that she wore a very gorgeous

costume, comprising an exceptionally baggy pair of Turkish trousers of crimson satin with gold spangles. Musical critics in 1836 were not quite so fully endowed with good manners as are their successors in 1894; and it is instructive to note in a contemporary criticism on the performance, and in so grave and scholarly a journal as the *Examiner*, the following remarkable appreciation of Miss Julia Smith (Artaxerxes) and her sister:—

“There are two stout Miss Smiths at the theatre, and one of these Miss Smiths acted Artaxerxes. This lady has a little fat person and a little fat, reedy voice, the effects of which approach occasionally the ludicrous. The two fat Miss Smiths sing little fat duets together very prettily; but as their two purse-y little voices do not make up one good voice, they ought never to be separated. The American motto is strongly exemplified in these ladies, and we advise them to pay every attention to it: *E pluribus unum*. It should be a double-barrelled engagement.”

I may mention that the sisters Smith were nieces of the Countess of Essex—the adorable “Kitty” Stephens, whose face still delightfully haunts the collector of old prints, as it beams from out

a group of spectators, in the engraving after Harlowe's once popular picture of the Trial Scene in *Henry the Eighth*—better known as the “Kemb'e Family.” I know sorrowfully well that I am talking ancient history; and even professional musicians may fail to be interested by the knowledge that in the orchestra, on the first night of *Artaxerxes*, the once renowned Harper played the trumpet, and Grattan Cooke played the hautboy. Grattan Cooke was for many years a favourite performer at the Philharmonic Concerts, and was afterwards bandmaster of one of the cavalry regiments of the Household Brigade. For the rest, although Dr. Arne's *Artaxerxes* has long since practically fallen into oblivion, and I suppose would be utterly unsuitable for performance on the modern stage, I hope that it is not impertinent to hint that this forgotten work contains a large number of exquisitely beautiful melodies. It is six-and-fifty years ago; yet often when I am at work the now cheering, now soothing, airs return to me with all the freshness of a new-gathered violet in spring; and I find myself humming “The Soldier Tired,” or “Mild as



the Moonbeams," or "Thy Father, Away!" or "Water Parted."

English operatic managers used to do very strange things occasionally, more than half a century since, in the way of interpolating compositions alien from the operas which they brought out. Thus, in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* at Covent Garden, in 1827, in which my mother enacted the Countess Almaviva, Madame Vestris, who played Susanna, was positively allowed to introduce the pretty, frivolous ballad "I've been Roaming;" and in *Artaxerxes*, at the St. James's, Handel's pathetic song, "Tears such as Tender Fathers shed," was foisted on Arne's score; while the recitative, "Dear and Beloved Shade," was the composition of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Henry R. Bishop, the composer, or at least the adapter, of the melody of "Home, Sweet Home." To complete the tableau of lyrical incongruities at the St. James's, the manager described *Artaxerxes* as "a Serious Burletta." Probably he had no thought of Dante's *Divine Comedy* in his mind when he affixed the epithet of serious to a burletta which is essentially a comic, and even farcical, composition; but he was compelled to

give it the ridiculous title by the then tyrannical and absurd system of theatrical licensing, which forbade the performance of operas exceeding one act in length save at certain privileged houses.

And now let me say a few words about certain English operas, short, merry, and sparkling, of which the fathers and mothers of elderly readers were once enthusiastically fond, but which I suppose are very rarely performed in an epoch that prefers the loose and lively *operas bouffes* of Offenbach, Lecocq, and Hervé to the innocent, tuneful, but, it must be owned, somewhat "pigtail" compositions of Charles Dibdin, the elder Hook, and their school. Did you ever hear of, or did you ever see, an opera called *The Lord of the Manor*, the libretto of which was altered by Charles Dibdin from a drama by General Burgoyne, of Saratoga fame, and the father of the valiant Field-Marshal Sir John Burgoyne? In this opera, the plot of which bears a slight resemblance to Farquhar's *Recruiting Officer*, there is a boisterous, riotous, drunken baggage-waggon woman called Moll Flaggon, as unlike our modern type of a *vivandière* as a wild

boar is unlike a sucking-pig. Moll Flaggon used to wear semi-military costume—a scarlet coatee with worsted embroidery, a quilted skirt that reached no lower than the knee, a tucked up apron (from one pocket of which protruded a brandy bottle), blue worsted hose, and clouted shoes. In the intervals of her ribaldry, her roaring ditties, and her “cellarflap” dances, she smoked a short pipe. Moll Flaggon was always played by a man; and I have had the advantage of seeing the edifying part performed by the admirable comedian John Pritt Harley. I can hear now the burden of one of the songs he sung—

“Kiss and drink
But never think,
’Tis all the same to-morrow.”

Harley also played, about the same time, the rôle of Lord Grizzle in Fielding’s burlesque of *Tom Thumb the Great*, and, not inappropriately, called at the St. James’s a “musical burletta.” The purport and significance of Fielding’s *Tom Thumb*, as a political satire, had been forgotten, even in the reign of William IV.; but the piece was a very droll one, and for awhile large

audiences flocked to see the extravaganza, to listen to the witty dialogue and the tuneful songs sung by the *dramatis personæ*. But who remembers the Princess Huncamunca and her famous *scena* beginning "Then Tremble all who Weddings ever made, and Tremble more who did this Match persuade"? Who remembers the duet between Noodle and Doodle—either the Noodle or the Doodle being in 1836 a young gentleman by the name of Alfred Wigan—and who preserves any definite recollection of Grizzle's doleful song after he is mortally wounded, "My Body is a Bankrupt's Shop, my grim Creditor is Death"? He died superbly—he could have "given points," even in this regard, to Mr. Lionel Brough; and the audience used to roar when Harley, couchant on the stage, dragged himself to the footlights, borrowed a snuff-box from Mr. George Santsbury, the leader of the orchestra, inhaled a parting pinch, and then rolling over and over, gave up the ghost with a sepulchral croak.

There was the opera of *The Quaker*, too. I can scarcely persuade myself that the charming air, "When the Lads of the Village," is wholly ignored at the present time; surely it must be

sung occasionally at village entertainments; but as for the opera itself, I am afraid that it is as dead as Queen Anne. And "Rosina," and "No Song, no Supper," with the indignant air of the discontented wife, "Go, George, I can't endure you"? And the delightful *Love in a Village*? Are there any modern young ladies who ever warble the sparkling duet in the First Act, "Hope, thou Nurse of young Desire"? Would the humours of the statute fair suit the *fin-de-siècle* taste? I have seen Keeley play Hodge; and I have heard that very capable English tenor, Allen, as young Meadows, sing, "How much superior Beauty awes"? And how long, I should like to know, is it since the comic English opera of *Midas* has been popular on the boards? *Midas*, with the rattling song for Apollo, "Pray, Goody, please to moderate the Rancour of your Tongue."

These simple-minded English operas, which were not very scientific, possibly not very artistic, musically speaking, but the words in the songs of which were not always sickly namby-pamby, continued to decline in public favour throughout

the 'thirties and for about five years in the next decade.

I just recollect witnessing, at the English Opera House (now the Lyceum), a hybrid kind of opera, candidly confessed by the librettist to be only a new broad, comic extravaganza entertainment, entitled *Giovanni in London; or, the Libertine Reclaimed*. It had first been produced at Drury Lane. Don Giovanni was of course played by the incomparable Eliza Vestris, who sent the town half crazy by her appearance in a peach-coloured tunic edged with silver embroidery, white silk tights, and half boots of the same hue as her tunic; while a magnificent diamond star sparkled in her black velvet cap with the white plume. *Rob Roy*, dramatically speaking a pale parody of Sir Walter's novel, was brought out as a musical drama in three acts ten years before I was born. The cast at Covent Garden in 1818 comprised that respectable tragedian, Mr. Egerton, as Sir Frederick Vernon, Liston as Bailie Nicol Jarvie, Miss Stephens as Diana Vernon, and Mrs. Bishop as Katty, whilst Mrs. Egerton was the first of Helen Macgregors, a part played in after

years by, among others, Mrs. W. West, Mrs. Warner, and my mother. Another operatic version of a novel by the then Great Unknown was *Guy Mannering ; or, the Gipsy's Prophecy*, which production has happily come down to our time, mainly owing, I should say, to the charm of Bishop's music and the admirable acting of Miss Geneviève Ward as Meg Merrilies, just as "Home, Sweet Home," sung by Miss Maria Tree, made the fortune of Howard Payne's melodrama of *Clari, the Maid of Milan*. The original cast of *Guy Mannering* at Covent Garden was a wonderfully strong one. Brahm and Sinclair alternately played Harry Bertram; Liston was Dominie Sampson, and Emery (the grandfather of Miss Winifred Emery) was Dandie Dinmont. Franco, a boy, was played by "Master" Barnett; but whether the youth at Covent Garden subsequently blossomed into Morris Barnett, the creator of the pathetic hero in *Monsieur Jacques*, or John Barnett, the composer of *The Mountain Sylph*, I am not aware. The part of Gilbert Glossin fell to that very fine actor Blanchard, and Lucy Bertram was impersonated by the enchanting Miss Stephens. No, I feel sure,

that "The Winds whistle cold" and the "Chough and Crow" have not lost their hold on English ears and hearts ; but I am afraid that no modern manager would be so adventurous as to produce *The Antiquary*, a musical play in three acts, in which Miss Stephens played Miss Wardour ; Mrs. Faucit, Elspeth ; Mr. Liston, Jonathan Oldbuck ; Emery, Edie Ochiltree ; and Blanchard, Caxon. Lovel was played by Duruset ; but, for all that, the music of the songs, glees, and duets was by Bishop. The musical play of *The Antiquary* would have, I am afraid, a very cold reception were it presented at the Lyric or the Prince of Wales's, and derision rather than applause might be the guerdon of the glee "Merrily Sounds the Dinner Bell." Another of the Waverley Novels, *The Heart of Midlothian*, was brought out at the Surrey, and was only qualified as a melodramatic romance ; but it was plentifully sprinkled with songs and choruses. Effie Deans sang, Jeanie Deans sang, Madge Wildfire sang, and Fitzwilliam as Dumbiedikes favoured the audience with Burns's "Willy Wastle Dwelt on Tweed." All these operas and quasi-operas were destined to be

eclipsed by three very bright planets which arose in the English dramatic firmament—John Barnett, Michael Balfe, and Vincent Wallace. Balfe was an intimate friend of our family; he, his excellent wife, his two daughters, and his little son lived in Conduit Street, Regent Street, and, between the years 1835 and 1839, I and my sister were almost daily visitors in the Balfe household. Louisa and Victoria Balfe were our playmates. Louisa, I believe, died not long after her marriage, but I was privileged to meet Victoria in 1865 at Madrid. She had been the wife of Sir John Crampton, sometime Minister at Washington and at Madrid; but “Vicky,” as I used to call her in her childhood, when I visited her in her sumptuous mansion in the Spanish capital, had become the spouse of the Duke of Frias, a Spanish grandee of ancient lineage, who was the son of that Duke of Frias who came to England as Ambassador-Extraordinary from Spain at the coronation of Queen Victoria.

CHAPTER XV.

SONGS THAT COME BACK TO ME.

Rossini and "the excellent M. La-da-di-da-de-da-de-day" — A Memory for Tunes—Arabic, Russian, and Spanish Melodies—A Phenomenon of the Musical Memory: the Probable Explanation—"The Evening Gun"—French Melodies—English Ballads and Choruses—"She Wore a Wreath of Roses" and its Composer—George Linley—*Lover's Ballads*—Songs to be avoided.

ROSSINI, the composer, who had a spice of malice in his humour, professed to be permanently unable to recollect the name of Sir Henry Bishop; and whenever he met an English friend with musical connections he would ask him, "And how goes the health of the excellent M. La-da-di-da-de-da-de-day?" and so proceeded to hum right through the melody of "Home, Sweet Home." It is possible, I take it, to be utterly ignorant of the art and science of music, and yet to have an accurate and copious musical memory. I was always passionately fond of music, and, in my boyhood, used pathetically to entreat that I might be taught the tuneful art;

but I was destined for other pursuits; and I only preserve, now, an abiding love for operatic music and a curiously retentive remembrance of the tunes which were long, long ago familiar to me.

Following the Emperor Napoleon III. and his gorgeous train through Algeria some eight-and-twenty years ago, I heard one night a wild chorus sung by Arabs in a coffee-house at Blidah. Being no Arabic scholar, I could make nothing of the words which the men in the burnouses chanted; but the tune remained for many years latent in my memory; and it came back to me unbidden, one day last year, when I had purchased a guitar for a youthful relative who is an adept on that delightful instrument. The melody haunted me so persistently for three days that, at length, I sent for a professor of music, who obligingly put down the notes as I sang them and welded the wild chorus into musical symmetry and artistic form.

I thought, while I was about it, that he might also note down a very touching, tune-ful melody I used to hear in Russia, sung to the music of the *balalaïka*, more than


five-and-thirty years ago. It is called the "Yemschick Song;" and to me the oddest circumstance connected with this well-known Muscovite ditty is, that while during the twenty years which intervened between my first and my second visit to the land of the Czar, I entirely forgot the soft-flowing Russ which I had acquired during my first six months' sojourn—with the exception, always, that I could still write the characters of the Russian alphabet—yet I remembered the words of "*Vot na pouti celo bolschoia*;" although their meaning had become quite lost to me. The musical professor took down the "Yemschick Song;" and before he left, I pressed him to "prick down"—to use Mr. Pepys' term—a certain Spanish peasant choral song, the music of which, after a long lapse of years, I remembered imperfectly, but of the words of which I could only remember something like this, "Carlos es rejín." To what North Iberian *patois* these words belong I do not know, but they linger in my mind.

Very often we yield to the dim persuasion that we are listening to a strain of music,

which we have no consciousness of having heard at any period in our lives; and this phenomenon, the experience of which is common, I should say, to the bulk of humanity, has often engendered in some minds the fanciful theory that the mysterious melody, which we think has been audible to us, pertains to some previous stage of existence. I would rather favour the thought, that the vaguely-imagined tune was one that was sung to us in our very earliest infancy; but that, in many cases, our harmonic memory is not retentive enough to have preserved the definite apprehension of the tune. Abundance of songs must have been sung to us in our cradles—abundance of tunes must have been played to us on the piano, by those who loved us in our infancy; yet, I should say, there must be very few children of humanity who have a definite idea of what they heard, or what they saw, when they were, say, twelve months old. If those whose memory for melody is vigorous and conservative exercised their faculty by repeating all the tunes which have impressed themselves on their minds—say from the age of four or six—such reminiscent

monsters, as I may call them, would become intolerable bores both to themselves and to their friends.

The charm of musical memory consists to me, so I have always thought, in the melody fading away for a time into apparent extinction, and of its suddenly and beautifully starting up before one unsummoned, but always welcome, at a period wholly unexpected. You are riding, I will say, on the sea-front at Brighton. There is a wonderful sunset of crimson and gold and orange, and the dying orb flashes in splendid profusion on the window-panes of houses projecting, at right angles, from the line of buildings on the front. Why should you hear, in the inner chambers of your mind, the booming reverberation of a cannon; and why should there come back to you the touching air of a ballad called "The Evening Gun," composed, if I remember aright, by a certain Mr. John Lodge Ellerton, full sixty years ago? That ballad visited me only yesterday; and the fascination which exists in these unlooked-for, but fondly cherished, recurrences of sweet sounds, is wonderfully enhanced by the circumstance that the



song brings back to you the scenes and the people of the bygone, and enables you to recall still more and more melodies, associated with the things and the creatures always lovable to you, and which you will love till you die.

It is sixty years since; and I am mentally transported to a drawing-room in Cannon Place, Brighton; and I can hear "The Bay of Dublin," and "Entreat Me not to Leave Thee," and "Lascia ch'io piango"; and, with the eyes of my soul, I can see the beautiful mother of the present Marquess of Dufferin. I can see Caroline Norton and Lady Combermere, and Harriet, Duchess of St. Albans, and Angela Burdett Coutts—the last quite a young girl—and Malibran, and Paganini, in his sitting-room at the Old Ship. It was only the golden sunset, and the remembered air of "The Evening Gun," that conjured up all these phantoms of a happy past. Please do not think that I intend to be studiously sentimental. Can any of my readers remember a wonderfully funny "society" song, that used to be sung close upon six decades ago, beginning, "So Miss Myrtle is Going to Marry"? The words were as humorous as the melody was vivaciously

tuneful. It was a lady-critic, I think, who was supposed to be telling some feminine friend of the approaching marriage of Miss Myrtle, and in successive stanzas she gently, oh, so gently! insinuated that the young lady and her *fiancé* were of hopelessly contrary dispositions, and that they would lead a cat-and-dog life; each verse, however, concluding with a deliciously spiteful refrain to the effect that Miss Myrtle was a charming woman, and her future spouse a most fortunate man.

As I hum the air now, there comes to me from France, straight as the railway line from Petersburg to Moscow—did not the Tsar Nicholas rule it with a pencil on a map, when the engineers asked him what course the line should follow?—a sparkling ditty called “*Les Compliments de Normandie*,” which was the rage in Paris early in the reign of Louis Philippe. I can see, even now, the lithographed drawing on the title-page, representing two pretty peasant women in *sabots* and lofty *cauchoises*, who are complimenting one another on their good looks and their smart caps and ribbons, but in whom there is a manifest undercurrent of envy, hatred,

malice, and all uncharitableness. The air is throughout lively and catching, but it rarely abides with me long; since it has to yield to a stern, austere, menacing, tragic melody, which, at the epoch I speak of, was sung by every musical amateur in Paris who was endowed with a strong baritone, or even a bass voice. The song was called "*L'Ange Déchu*," and related the awful remorse of a Spirit who had been appointed Guardian Angel to an *enfant de la terre*, a pretty girl, to whom he had imprudently made love. Mr. Thomas Moore might have approved of these angelical flirtations; but the French poet took a different view of the transaction.

Of course no reminiscences of melody of the Louis Philippe period can be destitute of a recollection of a certain patriotic song entitled "*La Parisienne*," now, I should say, wholly forgotten in the land of its birth. The Citizen King, shortly after the Revolution of July, forbade the performance of "*La Marseillaise*"; so his subjects had to be content with an illegitimate and truncated parody of the magnificent anthem of Rouget de l'Isle—"La Parisienne." It was a stimulating air enough, but a plagiarism

as well as a parody. The music was composed by Auber, and the words were by Casimir Delavigne, the author of "Louis XI." Strange to say, although I can remember, by a strong mental effort, the airs of nearly all the comic operas of the epoch to which I allude—the *Domino Noir*, the *Pré aux Clercs*, the *Ambassadrice*, the *Postillon de Longjumeau*, and many more, the tunes very rarely come back to me unasked; possibly for the reason that when I heard them as a schoolboy I was almost alone in Paris; and the operatic airs had thus no close association with scenes or persons that I care to recall. It was different with that gruesome tune the "*Ange Déchu*." It chanced that about 1843, when I went to school in England, the head of the remarkable Pestalozzian establishment at Turnham Green, who tried his best to give me an elementary training in the English language, was endowed with a very powerful bass voice, and had a French wife; and a certain way to gain his favour was to ask him to sing "*L'Ange Déchu*" when he had a little leisure. I really liked the song; although I must own that I was quite as partial

to the large slice of plum cake which was generally the reward of a request that my esteemed preceptor would sing the dismal ditty over again.

Long before this period my ears had garnered in, for careful preservation in mental silos, a number of delightful English ballads and choruses. I wonder if many elderly people at this time of day remember a rattling chorus in Balfe's *Siege of Rochelle*, beginning, "Swearing Death to Traitor Slave, Hands we Clasp, Swords we Draw; Heaven defend the True and Brave. *Vive le Roi! Vive le Roi*"! I believe that this chorus was chiefly, in the first instance, engraved on my mind by the circumstance that the English choristers at Drury Lane usually pronounced, as true Britons should, *Vive le Roi* as "Vive le Raw"! But, at all events, the tune itself riveted itself in my recollection and has never been removed therefrom. I will say nothing about John Barnett's lovely opera of *The Mountain Sylph*, because I have reason to believe that the dulcet melodies in that production are familiar to amateurs of the existing generation, and that the trio—if it be a trio—

of the "Magic-wove Scarf" is still occasionally warbled in musical circles.

Then, again, there must be, surely, up-to-date young ladies who sing the enchanting ballad of "She Wore a Wreath of Roses." I remember Mr. Thomas Haynes Bayly, the writer of the words of that delicious, if somewhat namby-pamby, ballad, well. The composer of the music was the Rev. Joseph Philip Knight, with whom I was also acquainted. Mr. T. H. Bayly was a dandy, who wore white kid gloves in the day-time. He was a gentleman; had been a man of fortune; but I suspect that, like Dogberry, he had had losses. Another composer of English ballads has, I hope, not yet drifted down the river of Lethe. This was George Linley, whom I remember as a robust, middle-aged gentleman in the early 'forties, who had married a daughter of the eminent Orientalist, Dr. Gilchrist. George Linley had been a captain in the Militia, and used to tell us stories—to me deeply interesting—of his exploits in suppressing certain rioters known as Luddites. I scarcely think that he was a very scientific

musician; but his beautiful melodies in the ballads "Constance" and "The Spirit of Love" return to me repeatedly in the night-season. He was not very richly remunerated by the music publishers for his always popular compositions. "Constance" had an immense sale, and "The Spirit of Love" may be sung yet for aught I know; but for the first of these ditties I am afraid that poor George did not get more than five-and-twenty pounds. Well, Crouch did not make a mint of money by "Kathleen Mavourneen." Naturally, "Kathleen" brings back to my memory some of the ballads of Samuel Lover. As Mr. Ashby Sterry has recently pointed out in the columns of an illustrated newspaper, the gifted Irishman in question was not only a skilled musician, but a poet, a novelist, a painter of miniatures, and an expert etcher; he illustrated his own novels of "Handy Andy" and "Rory O'More," the last of which was dramatised, I think, at the Adelphi. He composed the music for a song with the same title as the drama; but few people—even Irishmen, I should say—sing "Rory O'More" now. On the other

hand, "The Four-leaved Shamrock" should still retain its popularity; and a very frequent nocturnal visitor to me is the air of another of Lover's ballads, "The Low-backed Car," a wonderfully "lilting" tune, which has an additional link with my memory, owing to the fact that Lover's words were amusingly parodied at the height of the Crimean war in a poem by Robert Brough, called "The Low-bred Czar." Here is one of the verses :

In battle's wild commotion
The fiercest man of war
Will spare the child, and sword defiled
By woman's blood abhor.
But Nick (the word describes him),
Unmoved by tear or shriek,
The child will slay, its mother flay,
If she dares a word to speak
To disparage the low-bred Czar.
The whole forty thieves in a jar
Not a tithe nor a toll
Of the villainous soul
Could express of the low-bred Czar.

Curious to remember, our then good allies the French were, in the year 1855, of precisely the same mind as John Bull as to the amiable moral character of the Czar Nicholas of Russia.

Going back, for an instant, a few years, I take it for granted that "Through the Wood, Through the Wood" and "I'd be a Butterfly" have not yet been forgotten: but I am gravely doubtful as to whether many persons recollect that once tremendous favourite, "Oh, Give me Back My Arab Steed."

The music to Mrs. Hemans' ballads is, of course, as well remembered as the poems themselves, and are still the joys of quiet households; but I candidly admit that I do my best to avoid recalling the almost sublime "Burial in the Desert" and the magnificent "Pilgrim Fathers." I strive to banish them, because they fill me with an intense and almost overwhelming melancholy. It is good to be serious on occasion; but you can be serious without being sad. With many other sympathisers with a certain fat knight—I always think most shamefully and ungratefully treated by Henry V., who, so soon as he ascended the throne, turned prig and moralist, and gave the cold shoulder to his former boon companions—it strikes me that I was born about three o'clock in the afternoon, with a white head and somewhat

of a rotund stomach, and although I may have lost the best notes in my voice in the "halloaing and singing of anthems," I like to remember tunes that are joyous, and not those which, although artistically preferred, give me the blues. Felicia Hemans was a true poetess, but she seems to me to have been a hopeless pessimist.

CHAPTER XVI.

PICTURES THAT HAUNT ME.

Pictures Recalled by Association—Jack Sheppard, with a Difference—Cruikshank's Presentment of the Housebreaker—A Portrait at Washington—Guido's "Beatrice Cenci"—Laying a Ghost—Valdes Leal's "Dead Prelate"—Gruesome War Pictures—Jan Van Beers—The "Operating Theatre" of the Inquisition at Madrid—John Martin's Big Pictures—Hablott Knight Browne's "John Gilpin"—Turner's Paintings—Two Works in Distemper.

You can be haunted by a picture, just as you can be haunted by a melody; and pictorial apparitions are continually rising before my mind's eye: although I suspect that I should experience terrible difficulty were I to endeavour to enumerate consecutively the conspicuous features of even a dozen of the annual Exhibitions of the Royal Academy. Pictures, to my mind, should come up unbidden and unexpected; but, as a rule, one can trace the mental appearance of the phantoms to some association of their subjects with a passage in a book or newspaper which you are reading, or even to a figure or a face

which you fancy that you have seen before in the flesh, but which, when you delve a little into your memory, you find that you have seen only on canvas. For example, returning from Rome at the beginning of March, 1892, I noticed, while the luggage was being examined in the horribly uncomfortable Custom House at Venti-miglia, an individual whose visage immediately conjured up a portrait which I had seen some fourteen years ago in the bar of an hotel or tavern up an entry somewhere off Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, in the district of Columbia, U.S.A.

The person who had attracted my attention on the Riviera was a man about thirty years of age, high-shouldered, bull-necked, with very large staring brown eyes, a heavy jaw, and somewhat sensuous look. His forehead was low, his hair dark and unkempt, and his cheeks and chin presented unmistakable signs that, for some days, possibly a week, his face had known no barber's shear. To judge from the short, much-patched and cobbled blue blouse which he wore, he was presumably a Frenchman of the peasant or labourer order; he was a third-class passenger,

and his belongings consisted of a large number of bundles, which, on being untied by the *douaniers*, presented a curious collection of rags, bones, woollen socks, and sausages, together with an empty bird-cage and a frying pan. As I looked at him he underwent, to my mind, a transformation. The pale, unshaven face, the unkempt locks, the low forehead, the heavy maxillaries, the protruding brown eyes remained; but the blouse, the wide trousers, and the wooden sabots vanished, and were replaced by an early eighteenth century dress which had once been fine enough, but had become woefully tarnished and shabby. At once I exclaimed to myself, "That is Jack Sheppard, painted by Sir James Thornhill, at the time when the notorious housebreaker was lying in the condemned hold, Newgate," and brought to my notice, I believe, as I have mentioned in an earlier chapter, by Mr. Bayard when I was at Washington.

It is pretty well known by this time that the portrait of Jack Sheppard, with which we are all familiar in George Cruikshank's illustrations of a very exciting, but very mischievous, romance by Harrison Ainsworth, is a wholly imaginary

conception. Jack was not a dashing young fellow with a bullet head and closely-cropped hair; he was an uncouth, vulgar, crapulous miscreant. Nor is there any proof of the story told by Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, that Sir James Thornhill, when he visited Newgate to paint the portrait of the ruffian who was so soon to make his exit from the world at Tyburn, was accompanied by his youthful son-in-law, William Hogarth. I do not think that the illustrious English painter in question ever made graphic mention of Sheppard; although in one of his early engravings there is an allusion to another noted prison-breaker, a chimney-sweep named John Hall, whose exploits appear to have suggested the revoltingly dramatic ballad of "Sam Hall," which was once a popular music-hall ditty.

I have compared my memory of the Washington picture with an engraved portrait of Sheppard which I find in the "Criminal Recorder," a precursor of the "Newgate Calendar," the "Chronicles of Crime," and cognate works, which was published in 1804, and that portrait precisely agrees with the Washington

one as I remember it ; only the malefactor represented in the "Criminal Recorder" is clean shaven. That circumstance strengthens my belief that the Washington picture is a genuine one. Loaded as he was with heavy irons, Jack could scarcely have shaved himself; and there would have been great risk in allowing the prison barber to shave him, as possibly the desperado might have tried to cheat the gallows by jobbing his throat against the blade of the razor. Be it as it may, I never open Ainsworth's novel—for the sake of George Cruikshank's illustrations—without recalling that picture at Washington ; but I am wholly unable to account for the curious resemblance between the portrait which I saw in the Federal capital and the man in the blouse whom I met for a moment at Ventimiglia, and who, very probably, was no house-breaker, but a thoroughly respectable member of society, although unblessed by capricious Fortune.

Having travelled a good deal in many parts of the world, in the course of nearly two generations, I have naturally paid frequent visits to the great Continental picture galleries. I

believe that I am ardently fond of art, and I hope that I shall never cease to dwell with enthusiastic admiration on the masterpieces of the greatest painters the world has ever seen ; yet, strangely enough, very few of those masterpieces haunt me—that is to say, start up, as I put it at the beginning of this chapter, unexpected and unbidden. The reason for this may be that I live in the midst of engravings and illustrated books and photographs by the thousand, and that scarcely a day passes without my turning over portfolios and volumes full of prints, and rummaging in photographic albums, in order to rub up my memory of the triumphs of design, composition, and colour, which have passed before my eyes.

But these memories are not ghosts. Unless you are a professed ghost-raiser, like the Witch of Endor, phantoms should come upon you unawares, and should so depart. I have the honour of the acquaintance of a lady who complains that she is haunted by a portrait painted by Guido Reni, which she saw in a certain palace at Rome, and which the catalogue says is a picture of Beatrice Cenci ; it being,

however, no more a counterfeit presentment of that unhappy young person than it is of Madame de Pompadour or of Nell Gwynne. Guido's picture is that of a girl of fifteen. Her complexion is not very fresh-coloured; still the features of the maiden in Guido's portrait bear no signs whatever of the horrible agony which Beatrice had undergone day after day in the chamber of torture. The real Beatrice Cenci, as a learned Italian Professor has lately proved to demonstration, was two-and-twenty years of age when she was executed. She was not very good-looking; and she was the mother of a bouncing boy, in whose favour she made a will.

Still, my lady friend complains that the eyes, the wonderful eyes of Guido's model—who was, it is conjectured, a young Greek, his slave—followed her about the gallery where she first saw it, and continued to pursue her, in an uncomfortably haunting manner, long after she had returned to England. I told her that I had once been haunted by those eyes, just as she had been; but that I had contrived to lay the ghost in the Red Sea, by the adoption of a very simple expedient. Every time that I

journey to Rome I buy a copy in oil of the world-famous portrait, taking care that thirty francs shall be the maximum price which I pay for it. About a dozen of these effigies, unframed, stand side by side on the top of a bookcase about breast high in my work-room. I raise my eyes, now, from my desk to look upon these apocryphal Beatrices; and the original has long since ceased to haunt me. Familiarity with the ghost breeds not always contempt, but absence of astonishment or terror. If you really saw an apparition of Anne Boleyn, as she was nonsensically said to be haunting Hampton Court Palace some little time since, with her head under her arm, you would, on the first appearance of such a phantom, shake in your shoes with horror and alarm; but if the severed head were a pretty one, and the decollated Queen called on you every afternoon, it would not be long before you asked her to tea.

Of all the pictures by the great Spanish masters which I have feasted my eyes upon during three voyages in North and Southern Spain, there is only one that haunts me, and, I am sorry to say, in a highly disagreeable manner. This

picture is in the Church of La Caridad, at Seville—an almshouse for poor, old, and chiefly bed-ridden men—which, founded in 1578, was rebuilt in 1661 by Don Miguel de Mañara Vicentelo de Lara, who, in youth, was so terrible a profligate that he has been supposed to be the prototype of Molière's and Mozart's hero, Don Juan Tenorio. He abandoned his wicked ways, however, and made a good end of it. The church is full of splendid paintings, among which are a magnificent "Infant Saviour," a "St. John," and a "San Juan de Dios," by Murillo, the last-named picture being fully equal to Rembrandt at his best. Then, by the same master, there is the wondrous "Loaves and Fishes," and the "Moses Striking the Rock," which, in every one of its accessories, is so marvellously suggestive of intense thirst that the Spaniards call the picture "La Sed." But the painting that haunts me is the "Dead Prelate," by one Valdes Leal, which has been qualified as a "putrid" picture, and which Murillo said he could never look at without holding his nose. It is, indeed, an absolutely sickening presentment of death and corruption, mingled with gorgeously

painted accessories of gold and silver work and robes of lustrous fabric. Go where I may, and strive as much as I do to summon pleasant and cheerful images, that awful charnel-house dead prelate rises up periodically to fill me with horror and loathing.

These pictorial ghosts are only matters of continuously associated thought. While Valdes Leal and his "putrid" picture momentarily occupy my mind, my physical eye sweeps round my shelves in quest of two thin folios bound in crimson morocco. These contain a large number of etchings by the famous Spanish painter Don Francisco Goya y Lucientes, and bear the title of "*Los Desastres de la Guerra*"—the Disasters of War. The etchings, some of which are thinly aqua-tinted, are twenty times more horrible than Callot's well-known "*Miseries of War*," which are shocking enough in many of their details, but which are drawn on so minute a scale that it is often only by the aid of a strong magnifying glass that you can discern the barbarities which Man is inflicting on Man. In Goya's dreadful book the compositions are large and broad in execution; and

the dismal dramas which are being enacted strike you at once and chill you to the marrow. The artist has depicted the excesses committed by the French garrison of Madrid, after the unsuccessful rising of the populace on the memorable "Dos de Mayo," 1808.

Women, with black mantillas over their white skirts, are charging and firing cannon ; maddened mothers are stabbing ferocious French soldiers, with whom shrieking Spanish girls are struggling. Then come scores of pictures exhibiting the ferocious vengeance of the French. Men and women are being shot, impaled, burnt to death, garrotted, and chopped in pieces, and their mangled remains are being shot out of tumbrels into pits. I have a very large collection of Goya's etchings—the "Caprices," the "Prisoners," the "Bull-fightings," the "Proverbs," and others ; and I remember showing them, once, to Mr. Jan Van Beers. He admired—as who does not admire?—the extraordinary vigour and dramatic expression of the great Spaniard ; but when he came to the "Disasters of War" he found it for a time impossible to tear himself away from those terrible volumes, which exercised over him,

as they do over me, a weird and fearsome fascination. There is another Goya, too, an oil-painting, in the Royal Gallery at Brussels. It represents what may be termed the "operating theatre" of the Inquisition at Madrid, which, towards the end of the eighteenth century, had become a kind of Bridewell for the imprisonment and punishment, not only of suspected heretics, but also of quacks and mountebanks, fortune-tellers, and women of evil life. The Brussels picture, glowing as it does with light and colour, is a simply hideous performance. Victims of both sexes are being racked, fettered, scourged, branded, picketted, and maltreated in almost every possible form, and the colour of the whole work is as rich as that of a Rubens or a Reynolds.

When I was young I used to be haunted by the paintings, and the mezzotint engravings therefrom, of a once amazingly favourite, but now, I should say, mainly forgotten artist, John Martin. His pictures were vast architectural "machines," in which he imitated, not with very great success, the scheme of Rembrandt in juxtapositions of light and shadow. His figures

were misty and faulty in drawing and modelling; yet there was something about the man that imposed on you and made you, for a time, bow to him in deference and almost fear. The last of his oil paintings, the "Eve of the Deluge," I think I saw at the old British Institution in 1841. It was a huge canvas, so highly varnished as to rival the sheen of the painted panel of a state carriage. Of his earlier works, "Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still," "Belshazzar's Feast," the "Fall of Babylon," I can only remember the transcripts in mezzotint; but they haunted me for many a year, and I used to go home and strive to produce Martinesque effects by smoking jet-black a sheet of cardboard over a candle, and then dashing in violent effects of light with a penknife. There was a special printseller's shop in Wardour Street—a shop long since vanished—where there were always plenty of John Martin's alarming mezzotints on view. That shop I also recall, from the fact that I once saw in the window a large etching illustrating Cowper's "John Gilpin," for which splendid piece of needle work the artist, Hablot Knight Browne,

had received the prize of a medal, either of silver or gold, from the Royal Society of Arts. I cannot remember to have looked on this particular etching at any time or at any place since. As for the mezzotints after Martin, they must be entombed, somewhere or another, in dim portfolios, for I scarcely ever see them exposed to the public gaze. One morning, however, a few years since, walking down the Western Road, Brighton, I came across a temporary exhibition of Martin's original oil paintings. They had fallen into a desperately dingy and grubby condition; but the proprietor of the show informed me that these paintings had made the round of the world, and had been exhibited during a long course of years in ever so many countries.

There are a few Turners which come up to me of a sudden, and they are always welcome; although they are productions belonging to the epoch which most critics, with the exception perhaps of Mr. Ruskin, take to be the period of the mighty painter's decadence. I can remember very well, on the walls of the Royal Academy Exhibition at the National Gallery, not at Burlington House, the famous picture

of the express train dashing along a viaduct on the Great Western Railway, "Rain, Steam, and Speed," I think it was called. Then there was "Jessica at the Window," which, from the abundance of bright yellow in the background, was known to irreverent observers as the "Mad Woman and the Mustard Pot." The "Slave Ship," the "Old *Téméraire*," and "Venice—Going to the Ball," and "Returning from the Ball"—belonged, if I mistake not, to this period; and while watching effects of colour in sea and sky in distant lands, on the shores of the Pacific, in the Indian Ocean, in the Red Sea, in Spain and Italy, Turner's later incoherent but gorgeous colour-dreams have often flitted across my mental field of vision.

Perhaps, out of the many thousands of works of art which from first to last I must have looked upon at home and abroad, there are, in addition to those which I have already set down, no pictures that so persistently haunt me as two marvellous paintings executed between forty and fifty years ago. They were works in distemper—one painted by Clarkson Stanfield, R.A., for Macready, when he was lessee of Drury Lane

Theatre, and the other executed by William Beverly at the Princess's about 1846-7. The first was the seashore scene in *Acis and Galatea*, the second a scene in Edward Loder's opera of *The Night Dancers*, an exquisitely beautiful view of a lake with distant mountains, and in the foreground a palm.

CHAPTER XVII.

TAVERNS THAT HAVE VANISHED.

Metamorphosed Taverns—George IV. and his Works—The Making of Regent Street—Great Swallow Street—Development of Club Life—The Old White Hart, Bishopsgate Street—The Old Elephant, Fenchurch Street, and William Hogarth—The Old Dog, Holywell Street—Changing Fashions in Drinks—Business and Liquor Fifty Years Ago—The Rainbow, in Fleet Street—The Cock—Peele's Coffee House.

It is rather a difficult matter, and a delicate one to boot, to write about taverns which have vanished; since, within the last five-and-twenty years or so, an almost incomplete structural metamorphosis has taken place of many old-fashioned hotels and taverns which I remember in my youth. Still have we Long's and Limmer's; but they are not the Long's and Limmer's of my nonage. Scores upon scores of houses for the sale of excisable liquors have been partially or wholly reconstructed; they have been made, of course, brighter and handsomer, and offer much more luxurious accommodation to the public than under their old conditions they

used to do; yet, they wholly lack the picturesque associations which they presented to me when some three-and-forty years ago, in the columns of *Household Words*, I wrote a series of papers on "Phases of Public Life." The names of the original signs of the old taverns, at a few of which I propose to glance, are of course recited in the leases; but in a multitude of instances the frequenters of the transformed places of entertainment know nor care little whether the houses which they patronise are the Magpie and Stump, the Coach and Horses, the Crown, the Wrekin, the Angel and Sun, or the Monster.

There are, it is true, certain tavern signs the names of which have become, in connection with the vehicular traffic of the metropolis, permanently graven on the memory of that very large section of the public who travel by omnibus. Thus, there may be many thousands of people who have heard, and are well aware of, the locality of that same "Monster" at Pimlico, the Elephant and Castle, the Swiss Cottage, the Eyre Arms, the Sol's Arms, the Angel at Islington, the Mother Redcap, and the Hero of Waterloo; but who would never dream

of entering those hostelries ; and possibly a large proportion of these omnibus travellers are teetotallers.

I suppose that the process of the disappearance of the oldest of the London taverns began on an extended scale during the architectural supremacy of Nash, whose Royal master was commendably desirous of beautifying the metropolis of his dominions. William Hone, in the scurrilous *Political Catechism*, for publishing which he was tried before Lord Ellenborough and acquitted, paid an oblique compliment to the King whom he libelled by dubbing him " George, Maker of New Streets." One of the " new streets " which we owe to the taste and liberality of the much-maligned Fourth George was, as I have mentioned before, Regent Street ; and that handsome thoroughfare—which, were the houses only twenty feet higher, would be one of the noblest in Europe—was partially formed by the demolition of a long, shabby, dirty thoroughfare called Great Swallow Street, which abounded in old taverns and livery stables, the last of which enjoyed the equivocal celebrity of being much affected by highwaymen, for the putting up of

their steeds. Claude Duval is—I should say apocryphally—reputed to have been one of the distinguished patrons of the Great Swallow Street stables.

More old taverns had to be taken down to render practicable the audacious architectural curve of the Quadrant; and yet more taverns vanished to make way for the approach from the eastern corner of Piccadilly to Carlton House. Another cause of the disappearance of antique metropolitan taverns was the extraordinary development of clubs during the reigns of George IV. and William IV. The clubs of Eastern and Central London, during the eighteenth century, were more or less intellectual pot-houses; and the West-End clubs were mainly gaming-houses, which, with the exception of Brooks's and White's, had scant architectural pretensions; but very soon after the formation of Regent Street palatial clubs began to spring up with surprising rapidity in the parish of St. James. The innovation was hotly resented by many Conservatives in convivialism, whose idea of a club was that it should merely be a place for eating, drinking,

and conversation, and not necessarily occupying premises of its own.

I have before me a book called "The Clubs of London," published in 1828, in which no less than one hundred and thirty-two pages out of three hundred and thirty are devoted to a history of the "Sublime Society of Beefsteaks"—the old Beefsteak Club—then held in a room in the Lyceum Theatre. The writer has also some very genial words to say touching a number of clubs held at taverns and coffee-houses; but in his preface he contemptuously repudiates the name of club, as applied "to several modern subscription houses which, by a colloquial usurpation, are called clubs. They are merely substitutes for the coffee-houses which they have superseded. It was not the love of pleasant companionship that gave them birth; but a thrifty speculation that purveys at the cheapest rate for sensual satisfaction."

In the following year (1829) there was taken down the Old White Hart tavern, in Bishopsgate Street, an exceedingly quaint structure, the front to which bore the date 1480. It was three-storeyed, with an overhanging

upper floor, and had been noted by Stow as "a fair inn for receipt of travellers next unto the parish church of St. Buttolph." Obviously I never saw this remarkably ancient tavern, for the sufficing reason that I was only a year old when it vanished; but I have a distinct recollection of having been acquainted in my childhood with the outsides of many taverns quite as picturesque as the Old White Hart. I remember the slanting roof of the Thatched House tavern, standing a good way back, in St. James's Street. I have slept at the old Angel, in the Strand, where now is Danes' Inn. I remember the Crown and Anchor, and the London Tavern. I have visited friends staying at the Clarendon in Bond Street—a tomb of generations of aristocratic Capulets. I have a picture of the Old White Hart in an interleaved copy of a book called "Tavern Anecdotes, by One of the Old School," published, I should say, some time in the 'thirties, in which I find an engraving of the Old Elephant tavern in Fenchurch Street. It was kept by "M. Hibbert," and it vended, in addition to wines and spirits,

"Henry Meux and Co.'s Entire," and it proclaimed itself a "House of Call for Errand Carts."

What were errand carts? The Old Elephant was a three-storeyed brick house, with stone dressings to the windows, and to all appearance was of seventeenth-century construction. When did it disappear? I should like to know; because, in a newspaper cutting attached to the engraving, it is stated that the Old Elephant was worthy of the attention of all lovers of painting, since in it, previous to its celebrity, lodged William Hogarth. On the wall of the tap-room were four paintings by Hogarth, one representing the Hudson's Bay Company's porters; another the first idea for the "Modern Midnight Conversation," and another of "Harlequin and Pierrot." In a room on the first floor was a picture of Harlow Bush Fair—whatever Harlow Bush Fair may have been. If the great English painter, engraver, and philosopher did really lodge at the Old Elephant, it was probably at the period when he was engraving plates for a printseller in Cornhill. Of another very ancient tavern I have something more specific to say. I mean the

Old Dog, in Holywell Street ; a house which I remember very well, inasmuch as I resided there some months about three-and-forty years since. The hostelry has entirely disappeared ; the licence, I suppose, has long since lapsed ; and on the site of the old house have been erected two or three altogether modern shops. Early in the Restoration there was a tavern by the sign of The Dog, which is frequently mentioned in Pepys' "Diary." The house was much frequented by the Clerks of the Exchequer ; and on one occasion Mr. Pepys gave these estimable civil servants a dinner at The Dog. Lord Braybroke, in his first edition of the "Diary," says in a note that the Dog tavern still existed in Holywell Street ; but in subsequent editions this statement was corrected, and it was stated that Pepys' Dog must have been in Westminster ; although a house in Holywell Street still bore the same designation. The edition I now speak of bears the date 1890 ; but at least fifteen years, if not more, I should say, have elapsed since the demolition of the Old Dog in Holywell Street.

It must have faded out of existence while I was absent on some mission abroad. In any case,

a good deal of mystery has, so far as metropolitan antiquaries are concerned, surrounded the beginning and the ending of this particular tavern. Allan and Peter Cunningham, and other eminent writers have had nothing to say about the Old Dog, although it was situated in a street of which Strype makes mention in his edition of Stow; while the late Mr. Timbs incidentally alludes to it when he remarks that the Holy Well, which gave its name to the narrow little street, was under the Old Dog tavern. "This," writes Mr. Walford, in "Old and New London," "is clearly a mistake." As it happens, it has been my lot to look down a well, not under, but behind the Old Dog. About 1851 the house passed into the possession of the late Mr. Nicholas Dormer, the landlord of a tavern in the Strand close by, called "Old Betty's Chop House." To his ultimate misfortune, he made considerable structural alterations in the old premises, and, imbued with the persuasion that the choked-up well at the back was the identical Holy one, he spent nearly £200 in excavating the well, which was filled nearly to the top with miscellaneous rubbish.

Day after day I used to pay him a visit, to see how the excavations were progressing. Our "finds" were scarcely remunerative: consisting, as they mainly did, of huge quantities of smashed crockery, brickbats, old pots and kettles, and broken bottles. One or two interesting articles did turn up. There were numerous tobacco pipes of the "churchwarden" pattern, and bearing the date of 1742, and a scrap of paper seemingly torn out of a memorandum book, and containing in faded ink the words, "Dr. Goldsmith, 13s. 10d." Was this an unpaid score of "Goldie's"? There were the fragments of a shattered punch bowl, with a William and Mary guinea encrusted in a part of the base. Probably this china bowl had been broken in some midnight frolic and flung wantonly down the well; but when all these *débris* had been taken out we did not come on any water. The spring was as dry as though it had been sunk in the Valley of Dry Bones.

But I am anticipating a little. I knew the Old Dog some years before I made the acquaintance of Mr. Dormer. In 1847 I had an office at the western corner of Holywell Street, where I

edited, illustrated, published, and owned a little halfpenny weekly publication. The original proprietor had been a Mr. Frederick Marriott, who, on leaving England for California, where at San Francisco he founded the yet flourishing *San Francisco News Letter*, liberally assigned to me the copyright and goodwill of the little publication in question. After a while I took a partner. Our venture was not a highly prosperous one: the journal never obtaining more than a modest circulation. We could have lived very well on the advertisements, but the Inland Revenue ate us up in duties. All we wanted was a couple of thousand pounds or so to push the undertaking. One afternoon we received a visit from an American gentleman who had something to do, if I remember aright, with a pill, or a plaster, or a baby's soothing syrup, or something of that kind. He was one of our best advertisers, and his object in calling on us was to discuss the expediency of purchasing a third share in our journal. Of course, we named two thousand pounds as the minimum price; yet I scarcely think the property was worth quite so much as that.

Business, however, is business ; and in the days of which I speak very few business transactions could be begun or terminated without the agency of what was conventionally known as "a pint of wine." Frequently the pint became a quart, and not unfrequently brandy-and-water hot was considered as a convertible beverage for the juice of the grape. When I speak of brandy-and-water I may add that it was almost invariably brown brandy—precisely that brown brandy which my mother used to mingle with her Christmas plum-puddings, and which is understood by the Americans when they order "soda and dark bottom." To drink pale brandy, or cognac, was looked upon as an affectation ; and not one Englishman out of a hundred ever touched whisky, either the Irish or the Scotch variety. There are changing fashions in drinks as well as in most other mundane things.

For forty years I had been reading about the extensive consumption of "brandy pawnee" in India ; but when at last I did get to Calcutta, I found that brandy pawnee had become almost entirely a thing of the past, and

that the universal beverage among Anglo-Indians who drank anything stronger than water was much-diluted whisky. It was, however, a legitimate pint of wine that the American gentleman, my partner, and myself regaled ourselves with in the coffee-room of the Old Dog; for the tavern happened to be celebrated for its old port. None of your light old ports with no "tomorrow" in them; but a sound, stiff, beeswinged old crusted vintage, that seemed to grow stronger as it grew older. Our negotiations with the American gentleman did not, I am sorry to say, go beyond emptying, say, a couple of bottles of port and nibbling a few biscuits. I wish that he had nibbled at our offer as well; but he omitted to do so. The tavern where we discussed business and wine was a typical example of the houses of entertainment which have vanished from our midst. It was, like the old White Hart in Bishopsgate Street, a beetle-browed, three-storeyed structure, with three bays of windows on the first and second floor, and an overhanging superstructure. You entered the place by a rather steep flight of steps; and if you were privileged to enjoy the acquaintance of

the landlady of the establishment, Mr. Dormer's predecessor, you might at once walk into her extremely comfortable, although somewhat dark, bar parlour. There she used to sit in a big arm-chair, surrounded by heavy old furniture and dingy old prints in ponderous frames, chatting with her gossips, and generally beaming around in a manner most cheerful to behold.

The bar was a mere hutch or counter, cut in the wall, where a pretty barmaid attended to the needs of casual customers. These were, however, comparatively few and far between. Casual drinkers preferred Old Betty's Chop House in the Strand hard by, or some other of the "pubs" which abounded in the neighbourhood. The Old Dog did not bark furiously or even growl at people who wanted a glass of beer or spirits; but it did not wag its ancient tail at such patrons. A right cordial welcome, however, it extended to parties who desired "a pint of wine," and who were sedulously, although somewhat patronisingly, served by a very stout, elderly waiter, who disdained to bear a napkin on his arm, but who constantly waved a very large red-and-yellow bandana silk

handkerchief. There was a dining-room and a coffee-room on the other side of the passage, in which was the bar ; and there was another little apartment, not much bigger than a state-room on board an Atlantic steamship, which exiguous apartment was known as the smoke-room. As a matter of fact, smoking was allowed in the coffee-room after seven o'clock, by which hour the dinners had almost invariably come to an end ; while about five in the afternoon the landlady had in her bar parlour quite a little levée of substantial tradesmen and professional men in the neighbourhood, who came to gossip with her and each other and sip brown brandy and water.

Let there be no mistake about it : business between forty and fifty years ago was, to a very great extent, supported on pillars of excisable liquors. It would amaze youthful and middle-aged moderate drinkers, could they form an adequate idea of the amount of drinking which went on among well-to-do and decorous business men when I was a lad—drinking not by any means confined to the night season, but progressing very steadily throughout the day.

In one of Defoe's dialogue-stories, two respectable tradesmen meet, one of whom has just had a violent quarrel with his son. His friend suggests that they should adjourn to an adjacent tavern and discuss the whole question of parental authority over "a pint of wine," and they thus did in fiction in 1693 that which we used to do at the Old Dog in 1847. The house was largely supported in its hotel capacity by steady-going old commercial travellers: a race who, I suppose, have undergone the transformation which has taken place in almost every grade and profession. Many of these commercial "gents" had patronised the Dog for twenty or thirty years, and even longer; and they were sorrowfully scandalised when Mr. Dormer, having made a good deal of money at Old Betty's Chop House, purchased the lease of the Old Dog; and, while still keeping a number of bedrooms, converted the lower part of the house into a modern restaurant, with a capacious bar which was nothing more nor less than a highly-decorated "pub." For a while he prospered; but his enterprise was in the end disastrous, and the Dog, at last, disappeared for ever. I should much like,

nevertheless, to know what has become of the well out of which we extracted the broken shards of crockery and the eighteenth-century tobacco pipes.

Transformation as well as total disappearance has been the lot of many of the old taverns of my time. I can remember the Old Hummums in Covent Garden, and the old Rainbow in Fleet Street, near the Inner Temple gate. The Rainbow was formerly known as Nando's Coffee House, and in the time of Charles II. was kept by one James à Barbe, who was presented by the Inquest—or recommended for prosecution—by the Ward of St. Dunstan-in-the-West “for making and selling a sort of liquor called coffee, to the great nuisance and prejudice of the neighbourhood.” Of the Old Cock, likewise in Fleet Street, it would be obviously impertinent to say anything after “Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue,” but I may apologetically mention, as a proof of the rigid conservatism of the Cock, that a very old friend of mine, a well-known man of letters, taking his chop once at the Cock and following it with a salad, in the dressing of which he considered

himself an adept, asked for a hard-boiled egg. The head waiter looked at him earnestly, and politely but authoritatively replied, "Hif Prince Halbert wos to come here, sir, he couldn't 'ave a hegg."

Peele's Coffee House, now a handsome and quite modern house of entertainment, was in my youth an old tavern, the much-favoured resort of country squires, who, when they came up to town, found the beefsteaks at Peele's as toothsome as those on which they feasted, when they visited the West End, at the Blue Posts in Cork Street, Burlington Gardens. In 1885, happening to be at Adelaide, South Australia, I was favoured with the acquaintance of the chief of the mounted police, who was a very old Londoner, and who asked me if regular files of all the town and country newspapers were still kept at Peele's Coffee House, for the amusement or business reference of visitors who were desirous of learning the news of their particular county or town, or of knowing what property was to be disposed of in or out of London. By referring to these files, he added, any person who had sent an

advertisement to a paper might know if it had appeared at the time ordered. There was a diverting and instructive suggestiveness in this inquiry of those literally "dear" old days of journalism when the price of a daily newspaper was sevenpence, the Government appropriating no less than fourpence for the stamp. The penny stamp, which has also vanished, was, comparatively speaking, a modern impost.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DINNERS DEPARTED AND DISCUSSED.

French and English School Diet Compared—Eating Fat by Deputy—"Joe's" Chophouse in Finch Lane—Market before "Meat"—"A devilish good Dinner for Threepence Halfpenny"—The "Thirteen Cantons"—Beef *à la mode*—A Mysterious Sauce—A Famous Boiled Beef House in the Old Bailey—The Waitress and the Barrister—A Disestablished Feast—Responding for the Visitors—The Sublime Society of Steaks—An Unspoken Speech—A Dinner at Clifford's Inn—An American Maxim.

It stands to reason that, in the course of more than fifty years' dining out, one must have encountered a rather large number of interesting and, more or less, memorable repasts. It has been my lot to dine with all sorts and conditions of people, in almost every part of the world; and I am now jotting down, as chronologically as I am able to do, a few of the dinners of which I have partaken, together with some brief notices of the people I have met at more or less well-furnished tables.

Naturally, when we begin to take a retrospective view of bygone meals, the mind reverts

to scholastic experiences in the matter of feeding ; and I think I can serve some useful purpose if I tell my readers how schoolboys were fed in France and in England half a century since. As I have said before, I was at a public school in Paris for about two years. It was a day school ; so every morning about nine o'clock, I made one of a band of about forty boys who, under the charge of a *pion*, a kind of sub-usher, were marched down to college from the boarding house, or *pension*, in the Rue de Courcelles. At noon we were marched back again to breakfast ; at two we returned to college, and at five o'clock we made our final return to the Rue de Courcelles. You will excuse my particularising these hours, since I wish to show the radical difference which then existed between the manner of refecting boys in Paris and in London.

We rose at six in the morning in summer, and at seven in winter, our toilet being of the very roughest and rudest description. Then we assembled in the refectory, where every boy found, at his accustomed place at the board, an earthenware pipkin, holding at least a pint and a quarter of scalding hot milk, by the side of which was a

large hunch of excellent bread. Then a manservant came round with a huge tin coffee-pot, and poured about a gill of the concoction of the odoriferous product of Mocha—or elsewhere—into each boy's pipkin. This was our *café au lait*, or first breakfast. The elder boys, if they were in funds, were allowed to purchase a pat of butter; but, in the majority of cases, we were quite satisfied with bread, milk, and coffee. In summer time there was a slight diversion from the monotony of the *café au lait*. Two days a week we were marched to an *école de natation*, or swimming bath, on the banks of the Seine. After our bath we had the choice either of bread, milk, and coffee at the buffet attached to the baths, or of a little crusty loaf of brown bread, a tiny garlic sausage, a piece of Gruyère or Brie, and a cup of cold milk; and as we were usually sharp set, after a walk of a couple of miles and an hour's exercise at swimming, we were glad to avail ourselves of the brown bread, sausage, cheese, and cup of milk alternative.


The noon breakfast consisted of one dish of meat, for which on Friday was substituted either fish, eggs, or haricot beans, a dish of vegetables,

and some fruit. Apples and pears in the winter, grapes in the autumn, and currants or gooseberries and melons in summer. For dinner, at five o'clock, there was the inevitable *pot-au-feu*, or beef broth, with vegetables; after this came the *bowilli*, or beef, which had been slowly simmered, for I know not how many hours, to make the soup. It was not quite boiled to rags, as our own gravy beef generally and idiotically is, but it was certainly flavourless enough; and this trifling drawback was compensated for by a very relishing and savoury brown sauce being served with the *bowilli*. After this we had, according to the season, either some fowl or some turkey; to this succeeded a dish of vegetables, and either a sweet or a large plateful of liquid cream cheese; then dessert as at breakfast, and nothing more till half-past seven on the following morning.

I should add that, both at luncheon and at dinner, each boy had the fourth part of a bottle of *vin ordinaire*, which he was expected to dilute with at least half its volume of water. Of course, we used to say that the wine had been preliminarily diluted ere it came to table, and its current name among us

was *eau rouge*. Three times a week also a thoroughly good salad, dressed with excellent oil and unimpeachable white-wine vinegar, was served at dinner. Of course we grumbled at our fare. The salad, it was quite groundlessly asserted, was full of worms; the beef was of inferior quality; the poultry was tough and skinny; and the fish and eggs on fast days were stale. I do not suppose that any of these allegations had the slightest foundation in fact; but when has there been a period in the history of mankind, when schoolboys—and for the matter of that schoolgirls also—have not grumbled at the food provided for them?

Coming to England to a Pestalozzian academy at Turnham Green, for the purpose of learning the English language, which I had pretty well forgotten during my sojourn in France, I became acquainted with quite another kind of dietary. Breakfast was at eight, and the repast consisted of exceedingly weak and washy tea, and washier coffee on alternate days, with two thick slices of stale bread very thinly veneered with butter. If a boy still felt hungry when he had consumed these meagre commons



he was allowed to have an extra slice of bread and butter, if he asked for it in the German language. I have always preserved a lively antipathy for the Teutonic speech, and I fancy sometimes that my dislike for the tongue of Hermann springs in some measure from the frequency with which I used to break down in asking for more bread and butter in German. The *Wollen Sie so gütig sein?* used to come out very trippingly, but I usually broke down over the accusative of *stück*; and so lost the much-coveted slice.

Dinner came at one p.m. There was not much to be said against the meat, save that, to our thinking, there was not enough of it. It was hot one day and cold the next, and was as a rule uncomfortably abounding in fat. I had no experience of fat meat in France; and the fat, or rather suet, attached to the meagre slices of cold meat at the Pestalozzian academy, aroused in me feelings of absolute loathing. But it was a law of the Medes and Persians at that Pestalozzian place of education that no fat was to remain on any boy's plate; whether the unhappy youth could eat fat or not was a matter

of indifference to the authorities ; but the dreadful stuff had to vanish. I think that I paid a boy twopence a week to eat my fat. He sat just four boys below me ; and the abhorrent adipose lumps were passed to him in a pocket handkerchief. I believe he ate that fat. He was a tallish boy, with a pasty face. The only vegetables we had with our meat were potatoes one day, and boiled cabbage the next. There was always a pudding, either baked or boiled ; suet pudding with currants, and baked rice or bread and butter predominating. We never had any fish ; we never tasted veal, or pork, or poultry ; but, on breaking-up day of the Midsummer and Christmas holidays, every boy had a boiled egg. For tea, which was at five o'clock, there was the tea itself, accompanied by two more slices of thick bread, veneered with butter—an extra slice was not attainable by asking for it in German ; but on most evenings in the week the bread and butter was supplemented by a slice of plum cake. It was the laudable rule of the Pestalozzian academy that, when a boy's friends sent him a cake, he should at once give it up to the housekeeper, who cut it into

slices and sent it up to table at tea time, where it was impartially distributed among the young gentlemen, and the boy to whom the cake had been sent was privileged to ask two of his friends to partake of an extra slice. Boys as a rule are not bad fellows.

We had a considerable contingent of foreign boys among us, to whom cakes were seldom, if ever, sent; and I never knew an instance of a cakeless boy being jeered at for his destitution in this regard: nay, he would often be the favoured recipient of the extra slice which I have mentioned. On Sundays we had for dinner a dish which, I dare say, was wholesome enough, but which it was the fashion to abuse and vilify. It was a meat pie, with a very substantial crust, and, of course, following some immemorial schoolboy tradition, we called it Resurrection Pie, and declared that all the scraps of the week's dinners had been served up in this objectionable pasty. I frankly own that the indictments which we were continually bringing against our food were almost devoid of foundation; but, at the same time, I am bound to asseverate that we did not have,

by a long way, enough to eat. Such, at least, was my practical conviction, when I compared our attenuated rations with the abundant fare of my *pension* in the Rue de Courcelles, Paris.

I was never a greedy boy; but in youth I had a hearty appetite, and I confess, without shame, that three-fourths of the pocket-money allowed me during my sojourn at an English school were spent in buying eatables—not the “sweet-stuff” that boys are usually fond of squandering their pence upon; but downright solid food, sausage rolls or meat pies, or sandwiches, and so forth. Let it be understood, that neither of the schools of which I am speaking was of the Dotheboys Hall order. Both were expensive establishments, and in both the education imparted to us may fairly be described as splendid; at least, in France I had plenty of Latin and Greek, practical geometry—but no Euclid—drawing, modelling, and *belles lettres*; while, at my English school, I had to learn the hated German; and, in addition to the usual branches of a polite English education, we learned Italian, a little Spanish, and a great deal of music, both vocal and instrumental. The head master was a most

remarkable person. He was nominally a member of the Church of England, and we were carefully despatched every Sunday morning to Chiswick Parish Church; but, in the afternoon and evening, he would deliver to us what seemed to the majority of his hearers utterly incomprehensible theological harangues and disquisitions on the "spiritual signification" of Scripture. Unless I am mistaken, his religious sympathies were, to a considerable extent, in harmony with the nebulous doctrines of Emmanuel Swedenborg.

When I come to review the dinners of my adolescence—those, I mean, which I enjoyed after I had left a comfortable home to earn my own living—I am confronted by a few difficulties, not wholly insurmountable, but still not at all easy of solution. For example, it is quite impossible to notice these repasts in anything like chronological order. The dinners were not regularly continuous: they were only occasionally recurrent, and there were wide gaps or intervals between them, during which, I am inclined to suspect, the dinners must have been very few in number, if, indeed, they existed at all. Now, a clerk

in a Government office, if he have a tolerable memory, can bear in mind the whereabouts of all the restaurants or eating-houses which he has patronised since his first induction into the Civil Service. I am not able to keep anything of the nature of an exact record of the meals which I discussed between my twentieth and my thirtieth years. They varied in quantity and in quality; still, assuming that at the least fortunate period I had a regular dinner, say, a hundred and fifty days in each year, I must have resorted to a very large number of dining-rooms. My friend Mr. Edmund Yates knows much more about the City chop house, which flourished while he was in the Post Office, than I do.


I can only recall with distinctness one chop house east of St. Paul's. It was somewhere near the Mansion House end of Cornhill, if I remember aright, and was one of the regular orthodox Old London luncheon houses. Men worth their hundred thousand pounds, bankers and merchants and stock-brokers, at the time of the railway mania, were not ashamed to lunch at this establishment, under the following primitive and unostentatious circumstances.

*Yates
Chop House*

The first thing your hundred thousand pound man did was to proceed to Bannister's, the butcher, somewhere near Threadneedle Street, and purchase his chop or steak, which was handed to him neatly wrapped up in a fresh cabbage-leaf; then, if he preferred biscuit to bread, he would repair to the shop of a baker named Moxhay, a shrewd Scotchman, who made, I think, a very large fortune, and built a huge edifice called the Hall of Commerce, which has long since been converted into a bank or insurance office, or something of that kind. With their raw meat wrapped up in a cabbage-leaf in one hand, and their bag of biscuits in the other, the City Croesuses would placidly enter their favourite chop house, where a bald-headed waiter would take charge of the viands, deliver them to the cook, and in due time bring them piping hot to the guests. Potatoes were always in readiness, together with the proper condiments and good store of Stilton and Cheddar cheese. Still, looking at the circumstance that the majority of the customers brought their own meat with them, you might ask where the chop house keeper's profits came in. The remunerative

part of the business was the very large consumption of brown stout, sound sherry and Madeira, and old port, both dry and fruity. In those remote times gentlemen saw nothing derogatory in comfortably cracking a bottle of port at a chop house, after disposing with equal cheerfulness of a quart of stout, and then going back to business. There were giants in the land in those days.

I have an indistinct idea also that, at one period of my youth, I was a pretty constant customer at a particular eating-house on Holborn Hill, in the window of which restaurant there was a placard bearing an inscription, "A devilish good dinner for threepence halfpenny." The devilish good dinner was simply stewed leg of beef and, with a liberal allowance of bread, was really a most satisfying meal. Much more epicurean, however, was the fare obtainable at the different establishments for the sale of what was called *alamode* beef, which, with the exception of its bovine foundation, presented no culinary resemblance to that *bœuf à la mode* which is one of the standing dishes of the French *cuisine bourgeoise*, and can be obtained to perfection at



the present day at a restaurant in one of the streets at the rear of the Palais Royal. Forty, thirty, and even twenty years ago, *alamode* beef shops were scattered pretty liberally over central London, but the establishment with which I was most familiar was a house with the sign of the "Thirteen Cantons," in Blackmore Street, Drury Lane. It was kept by a person by the name, I think, of Jacquet. If you asked for a fourpenny plate of *alamode*, it was brought to you in a pewter plate; and that plate, I warrant you, stood very little in need of cleaning after the beef had been despatched. The customers' knives and spoons made the pewter glisten as though it were silver. For sixpence you were served with a somewhat larger portion of *alamode* on an earthenware plate. Why it was called *alamode* puzzled me; but it was a distinctly characteristic dish, deriving its peculiarity from the remarkably luscious and tasty sauce, or rather soup, with which it was accompanied. The composition of this thick rich sauce perplexed many culinary experts. Soyer, who was very fond of *alamode* beef, and often used to send for a quart of it in a jug for the refectation of himself and friends at

supper, frankly acknowledged that he did not know what were the ingredients of the sauce.

The late Mr. Christopher Pond, of the firm of Spiers and Pond, was of opinion that the thickening was made with arrowroot ; but, happening some twenty years ago to have made sportive mention in some periodical or another of the by-gone *alamode* beef at the "Thirteen Cantons," the former proprietor of the establishment wrote me a very courteous letter and cleared up the mystery. He had retired from business, he told me, having realised a modest competence, and had no longer any reason to keep the recipe for the thickening a secret. It was simply, he said, made from a particular mushroom, which he called "morella," and which I infer was the *Morchella esculenta* described in botanical works. These mushrooms were gathered in the fields round about the metropolis, dried, reduced to powder, and then used to thicken the sauce and enhance the flavour of *alamode* beef. There may be a few eating-houses which are still exclusively devoted to the preparation of this speciality ; but I am inclined to fear that *alamode* beef houses in London have grown as rare as the pewter plates

on which the fourpenny portions were served in the by-gones.*

Among the dinners departed and discussed during adolescence and maturity, I should be erring gravely if I did not allude to two most remarkable places of entertainment which formerly adorned the Old Bailey. The first was Williams's Boiled Beef House, which stood on the right hand side of the thoroughfare just named, as you ascend the once repulsive, but now handsome, Ludgate Hill. Williams's was an establishment wholly devoid of architectural pretensions; and the ceilings of the dining-room were, if I mistake not, somewhat low. The floor—in my time, at least—was sanded; the knives were devoid of balanced handles, and the forks were of steel and had only three prongs. You see that this memorable eating-house dated from days long before Elkington, and even before the era when a substitute for

* Since these remarks were first published I have received several letters telling me that *alamode* beef can still be obtained at numerous restaurants in the metropolis. That may be, and I am glad to hear it; yet I doubt whether there are any eating-houses left exclusively devoted to the sale of *alamode* and conducted on the old-fashioned "Thirteen Cantons" model—including the pewter platters.

silver, sometimes called "albata," sometimes "Britannia metal," and sometimes "Sheffield plate," was used in middle-class eating-houses. The triumphantly predominant staple at Williams's was the boiled beef. It was renowned throughout Europe. French culinary critics declared it to be superior to their own beloved *bouilli*, and a formidable rival to our own "rosbif." Williams's boiled beef needed no rich sauce to make it palatable. It stood on its own merits—calmly, loftily, serenely, and without fear of competition. The joints—if joints the mighty masses of meat could be called—weighed on an average thirty pounds each, and were taken from the silver or "tongue" side of the round.

Williams's cook, a pale, portly, pensive man, who had been boiling-cook at the London Tavern, sometimes condescended to tell regular customers that he salted his beef for eight or ten days; then cleaned off the brine, skewered the round up tight, and encircled it with a piece of wide tape to keep it well together. The meat was allowed to simmer very gently, allowing twenty minutes for

each pound weight. No "made" gravy, if you please, with this not only British, but Homeric, dish. Only some of the liquor in which the meat had been boiled was thrown over it. It was wine of beef. Only one variant to the classic "round" was permitted at Williams's. To please the eyes of more artistic guests there was a boiled beef at the Old Bailey eating-house which had been pickled with salt, sugar, and powdered saltpetre, which last gave the flesh a fine ruddy hue. With each joint were served accompaniments or "trimmings" more elaborate than those which come with a boiled leg of mutton—that is to say, potatoes, mashed turnips, together with caper sauce. At Williams's you had potatoes of exquisite mealiness, carrots sweet and juicy, greens if you liked, boiled to a turn with just a dash of vinegar to give them life, and, to crown all, suet pudding—an almost pellucid pudding, with such liberality had the suet been introduced to modify and mollify the lumpiness of the flour and water.

All these divers dainties were brought in vessels of block tin, somewhat resembling the French *gamelle*—that is to say, into the

structure of the different dishes, which constituted, so to speak, a kind of metallic pillar, there entered that "tambour" principle which was used by Philibert de Lorne in the construction of the columns in the façade of the Tuileries. The service at Williams's was exclusively performed by waitresses; and the unerring accuracy with which they carried the round towers of block tin, so that they should never topple over, earned for those neat-handed Phyllises the admiration of customers, who were besides chronically pleased by the good looks and the civility of the female attendants. There was a legend current among the *habitués* of the restaurant that a young barrister, just called, who had elected to seek for practice at the Old Bailey bar, once entered Williams's, and called for beef with the "usuals"—the "usuals" meaning the vegetables and suet pudding. The neat-handed Phyllis made her appearance in due time bearing the circular tower of metal with "tambours" of beef and accessories. She was a very good-looking waitress, and ordinarily a smiling one. She looked the youthful barrister

in the face ; and then her comely countenance first flushed scarlet, and then assumed a hue of muffin-like pallor. Her hand shook ; the circular tower became more pendant than the leaning tower of Pisa ; she screamed “ Wretch ! ” and down went the entire fabric, the beef whizzing in one direction, and the vegetables and the pudding in another. To quote Coleridge :—

“ Alas ! they had been friends in youth ;
But whispering tongues can poison truth,
And constancy lives in realms above,
And life is thorny, and youth is vain,
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.”

This calamitous *rencontre* must have taken place some time about 1849. I was a pretty constant customer, I should say, for some time afterwards ; but when the regretted disestablishment of Williams’s took place I am unable to tell.

You will remember that when Æneas and his shipwrecked companions landed on the Punic coast they felt extremely hungry, and at once proceeded to knock over three “ beamy stags,” which, being duly cut up, were hurriedly boiled

in a cauldron, the improvised meal being washed down by sundry jars of generous wine, the gift of the Trinacrian Acestes. Æneas's meal of seethed venison may, for the purpose which I have in hand, be likened to Williams's Boiled Beef House, which was rarely called to furnish jars of generous wine, but often, as a graceful substitute, offered stimulating old ale and choice brown stout. But Virgilian students will likewise call to mind the fact that Æneas and his jovial crew were subsequently and splendidly entertained in Queen Dido's palace. Ten fat oxen were sent to the ship, together with a hundred boars and as many lambs; while the Trojan prince himself was banqueted on the rarest viands; after which golden bowls with sparkling wine—possibly the first mention in poetry of champagne—went round, and through the palace cheerful cries resounded.

I had my feast at Dido's Palace in the Old Bailey, long after Williams's boiled beef and "usuals" had become a departed dinner. My Dido was the Lord Mayor of London, and the Trojan lords of the Central Criminal Court were one of her Majesty's Judges,

the Recorder, the Common Serjeant, the Sheriffs, and a sprinkling of the members of the Old Bailey bar. The hospitable friend who was kind enough to invite me to this most characteristic dinner was Alderman Sir John Bennett; and the year, I fancy, must have been the one in which he served the Shrieval office. City Corporation usages die hard; and it is worth notice that so long since as 1836 the late Mr. Abraham Hayward, in the course of a diverting article, "On Matters Culinary" in the *Quarterly Review*, remarked that "the fiat had gone forth already against one class of City dinners, which was altogether peculiar of its time"; yet it must have been more than thirty years after the appearance of this article that I found myself a guest at the well-spread board in the dining-room over the Court.

Originally, I believe, these banquets consisted exclusively of beefsteaks; but at the dinner at which I was present there were three courses and a dessert, in the most approved style of Messrs. Ring and Brymer's *cuisine*. Port and sherry made a conspicuous appearance, and there was also plenty of

champagne and claret—in fact, it was a civic dinner of the highest class, and only differed from the symposia of the Mansion House and the halls of the City Companies in the circumstance that there was one course composed of marrow pudding. It will be at once apparent that, although these famous puddings are practically sweet cakes, made as they are of thin slices of bread, marrow, cream, eggs, citron, sugar, and pounded sweet almonds, a graceful tribute was paid to beef at the Central Court dinners by the fact that the marrow was invariably beef marrow.

Another characteristic of these departed tribunals was that the vice-chair was taken by the chaplain or Ordinary of Newgate, whose special duty it was to see that the glasses of the guests at his end of the table were kept fully charged. There was some speech-making after dinner; the oratory being delivered sitting and not standing. I had to return thanks for the visitors, and I naturally prefaced my few words of grateful acknowledgment by remarking that I found myself dreadfully alarmed at being surrounded by so many exalted legal and civic

functionaries ; and that, under the circumstances, perhaps the best thing I could do was to beg to be enlarged on my own recognisances, and come up for judgment, at that same dinner table, next session. Some kind of repasts are, I suppose, still held in the apartment over the Court during the periodical sittings of the Central Criminal Court ; but the grandiose banquets, with the Lord Mayor in the chair and the Ordinary of Newgate in the vice, together with the marrow pudding and the sedentary speech-making after dinner, have, I fear, departed for good.

Touching the inconveniences experienced by a tyro in after-dinner oratory, I may be allowed to recall a little post-prandial address which I once endeavoured, wholly unsuccessfully, to deliver at one of the dinners of the Sublime Society of Steaks, more popularly known as the Old Beefsteak Club. This once-celebrated symposium was held in that which is now the Armoury of the Lyceum Theatre, but it is still known, I am told, as the Beefsteak Room. My host was a well-known sculptor, long since deceased, named Jones. The dinner, if my memory serves me

correctly, took place in the summer of 1857 or 1858, and among the company I recollect the late Sir Charles Locock and John Lord Campbell, sometime Lord High Chancellor of England. I think Sir Charles Locock was in the chair ; but I am certain that that eminent medical practitioner sang a song after dinner, which ditty was emphatically declared by the members to be a thoroughly "Beefsteak" song. Lord Brougham was expected, but he did not put in an appearance. The furniture of the club-room was very simple ; but the damask tablecloths were of the finest, and there was a handsome show of plate. One extremity of the room was in the form of a huge gridiron, through which you could see the cooks exercising their vocation in front of a roaring fire. The steaks were served in little pieces about two inches long by an inch broad, hot and hot, and there was nothing but steaks. I remember a good deal of port and a good deal of punch, but there was no champagne. Whether smoking was, or was not, permitted I am not prepared to say ; but I am inclined to think that nicotine was inhibited.

The first toast was of a peculiar nature ;

and the chairman, whose seat was considerably elevated beyond those of the other guests, assumed, at one stage of the proceedings, a short velvet robe adorned with ermine, which was stated to have been worn by Garrick in the character of Richard III. As at the Old Bailey, it fell to my lot to return thanks for the visitors, and as it happened that no less than ten days had elapsed between my reception of the invitation and the occurrence of the dinner itself, I found time to learn by heart what I secretly thought to be really a neat and effective little speech. There was good need for its possessing these qualities, since my host told me of the probable attendance at the club of two such giants of oratory as Henry Brougham and John Campbell.

Well; when the time arrived, I rose to make my speech, but I had not reached the end of the first sentence, before my voice was drowned by the unanimous and uproarious "Hear, hears!" of the members. I began the speech again, only to encounter a fresh burst of cheering, and, at last, after

perhaps half a dozen futile attempts to make myself heard, I abandoned the endeavour, and sat down quite baffled and discomfited. Then one of the members rose and proposed to the assemblage, which had become quite quiet and attentive in listening, "that the long and eloquent speech just made by their guest should be forthwith printed, at the cost and charges of the Sublime Society, for private circulation only." I am afraid that the humours of the Sublime Society would scarcely be appreciated at the present day; nor, perhaps, would the style and diction of the songs chanted after the banquet find greater favour with this fastidious age. The Old Beefsteak Club, indeed, has become a convivial anachronism. The dinner began at five and the festivities were over by half-past nine; and what with the port and the punch there was some peril of your finding yourself under the portico of the Lyceum Theatre in a somewhat dishevelled condition just as the broughams of the nobility and gentry were passing up Wellington Street on their way to the Royal Italian Opera, Covent Garden.

I may say a few words touching another

very curious dinner which I once discussed, but which I hope is not yet departed. In the remote by-gones my old friend, the late Mr. Samuel Joyce, Q.C., took me to dine one evening in the hall of that extremely ancient Inn of Chancery, Clifford's Inn, of which the only knowledge that I then possessed was that the hall was the place where Sir Matthew Hale and seven other legal assessors sat after the Great Fire of 1666 to adjudicate upon the claims of landlords and tenants of houses which had perished in the flames. I think Mr. Joyce was an Ancient of the Inn. There was a senior and a junior table in the picturesque, but not very spacious, hall, in which, I think, there was also preserved an old oak folding-case containing the rules of the institution, and said to date from the reign of Henry VIII. It was a capital dinner, and the port was rich and rare; but the peculiarity of the banquet was in the following ceremonial:

After dinner the chairman at the junior table, which was called either the Kentish Mess or the Kentish Men, took from the hands of a servitor four small rolls of bread

baked together, dashed them three times on the table, and then pushed the rolls down to the further end of the board, saying at the same time, "I drink to the Rules." Subsequently the Principal, at the senior table, rose and drank to the "Kentish Men" or "Mess." There was a mysterious solemnity about the whole affair which threw you into doubt as to whether you should laugh or look serious; but, on the whole, following the American precept, "If in doubt take a drink," the best way out of the difficulty was to devote yourself assiduously to the fine old port of this fine old Inn of Chancery.

Many dinners have I discussed in the mess-room of the Guards at St. James's Palace, and I have also enjoyed the hospitality of the officer on guard at the Bank of England and in the Tower of London; but the character of those banquets is too well known to need description here; and, again, none of these dinners are, happily, "departed."

CHAPTER XIX.

COOKS OF MY ACQUAINTANCE.

"The Wretchedest of Weaklings"—Boy and Girl Cooks—The Potato—Prices in the Past—Concerning Omelettes—Fricour's—How to Govern a Kitchen—Verrey's—Bertolini's—Hungerford Market—The Swan Tavern and its Denizens—A Man with a Grievance and a Devourer of Crabs—A Meeting with Soyer—Madame Soyer—A "Magic Stove"—Francatelli.

IN my early home we were all taught to cook. Although I am, with one exception, the sole survivor of a family of thirteen, I was in childhood the wretchedest of weaklings—rickety, purblind, deaf, hysterical, and with a chronic inflammation of the mucous membrane which caused me, at the slightest provocation of dust or a draught, to "sneeze my head off," so to speak. Indeed, I may say, that my life has been almost one continuous course of catarrh: and even the movement of the Indian punkah has sufficed to set up a kind of hay-fever in that unfortunate membrane of mine. Being, then, what is called a delicate child, I was excused from the more arduous labours of the kitchen

range. I was never made to baste a joint; and, possibly, it may be because I was sometimes made to boil a potato that I so heartily detest that questionably nutritious tuber, which, to my mind, has, since its introduction as a popular article of food — about the middle of the eighteenth century—been the curse and bane of the English kitchen. Prior to 1750 the potato was always served as a sweet dish, being dressed with cream, sugar, almonds, rosewater, and spices; but late in the reign of George II. the general practice of potato-eating found its way from Ireland into Lancashire; and soon afterwards potatoes earned the greedy appreciation of the English people as food to be eaten with meat. To be sure, it was denounced by Cobbett as “hog’s food;” but then the savage old editor of the *Political Register* loathed tea quite as implacably as he did the potato; and both continue to retain their hold on the popular taste as articles of daily diet.

So it did not fall to my lot to roast; although I dare say I was as fond as most small people used to be of the surreptitious dainty known as a “sop in the pan.” The

culinary training through which, together with my brothers and sister, I passed, included the making of soups, the artistic dressing of vegetables—I mean the sending of them to table as distinct and independent dishes, and not as mere accessories to be heaped indiscriminately on a plate already overladen with meat—the preparation of *entrées*, and the confection of pies and puddings. By the time I was ten years old I was an expert hand at dressing hashed mutton, a dish which, according to its cooking, may be either one of the most succulent or the most nauseous of foods.

We were taught to make collops after the Scotch fashion, to mince the mutton, to braise it with vegetables, to make it into kebobs, to encase it in paste and fry it, to curry it, and especially to hash it; and it was in the last form that I, considering my years, was supposed to excel. Many and many a time has my parent, when starting at about eleven in the morning on her round of singing lessons, bidden me get the mutton well under way, to be served as a hash at four o'clock in the afternoon, which was our dinner hour. This was when my

brothers and sister were all absent; and I was, after a fashion, the housekeeper to a family of two. I sliced the cold meat carefully, dusted the slices with flour, and seasoned them with pepper and salt; then I set the slices on a plate, and for an hour or so would dig my elbows into a big folio copy of Lyttleton's "History of England" and read as hard as I could.

Then I would take a writing lesson in copying the big initial letters at the beginning of the chapters; for although, when I recovered from blindness, my sister taught me to read, I preferred to be my own instructor in calligraphy. Many other dishes I was taught, with equal care and patience, to cook, or to assist in cooking; and I specially remember my achievements in the way of stewing and frying tripe, of stewing kidneys—I could never eat them—of making toad-in-the-hole, and of concocting Tomato, Piquante, Provençale, "Poor Man's" Shalot, Gravy, Robert and Lyonnaise sauces for cutlets. For fish days I also learnt the secret of making "black butter" sauce for skate. In making puddings and pastry my sister was a brighter proficient

than I, her hand being lighter and her sense of dulcet flavour more delicate than mine; but we were both beaten in the culinary competition by my brother Charles, who was six years my senior, and whom I regarded almost with veneration as an unequalled fabricator of meat pies. He was as grand at rumpsteak as he was at veal-and-ham, steak-and-kidney, game, and pigeon pie; but, perhaps, his steak-and-kidney pie was his masterpiece. Long years afterwards we kept bachelor house together in a little street off the Western Road at Brighton; and once a week, at least, we had one of my brother's notable rump-steak pies for dinner. I was allowed to make the crust; but it was he who arranged all the savoury ingredients of the pasty. When the pie was ready, I conveyed the dainty to the bakehouse; and five minutes before the dish was to be ready for delivery my brother would pop in at the bakehouse, cause the pie to be withdrawn from the oven, delicately raise the crust, pour in four pennyworth of cream, and then allow it to be restored for a brief space to the hot chamber.

I must confess that my early culinary

reminiscences are not quite devoid of melancholic souvenirs. Oh ! the agonies of trying to make a mayonnaise sauce : the crushing with a wooden spoon of the hard-boiled yolks of eggs ; the dropping in of the oil drop by drop ; the difficulty of having made too free with the tartrate of vinegar. Often, it need scarcely be said, I made sad bungles in my cooking, and had to be content with what resignation I might, the stern reprimands which I so richly deserved ; but, on the whole, I was oftener rewarded with a kiss than with a scolding for what I had done in the art of dressing little dishes. Those of my culinary memories which are slightly sad are connected with the two first cooks whose acquaintance I chanced to make between 1836 and 1839. It was my duty to effect most of the household purchases ; and to that circumstance I owe my curious technical knowledge, which I have not lost, of the prices current of provisions. I can trace the gradual fall in the price of tea for the period when I used to buy it at a grocery shop kept by a Quaker, named Joshua, in Regent Street. It was mixed tea, six shillings green and five shillings black per pound.

Coffee was half-a-crown a pound, and the best lump sugar eighteen pence ; while the best fresh butter was one and eightpence ; the quartern loaf varied in price between elevenpence and eightpence—I can remember it, once, at thirteenpence—and flour was threepence a pound. New-laid eggs were three-halfpence each, and they *were* new-laid. This marketing rather interested me than annoyed me ; nor even now, when I am old and feeble, have I ceased to take an interest in marketing, and very willingly go shopping if I am allowed to do so. But those cooks whose acquaintance I was forced to make ! Very frequently, during the London season, some musical friends would drop in about three o'clock in the afternoon ; and very often they would be asked to stay to dinner. Rubini and Tamburini, Lablache, and the Russian tenor Ivanoff, Grisi, and Persiani were among the guests whom I best remember ; and at least once I know we enjoyed the society at dinner of the fascinating Marie Malibran and her husband, M. de Beriot. The incomparable Marie Taglioni—the Sylphide of Sylphides—was likewise sometimes of our company, as she

smilingly told me when, long long years afterwards, I met her, as the Countess Gilbert des Voisins, at the memorable banquet to Literature and Art given at the Mansion House during the mayoralty of Sir Andrew Lusk.

For these distinguished foreigners our household would cater, in the way of such Continental delicacies as macaroni, stuffato, ravioli, polpette, risotto, and so forth, in the Milanese or the Florentine, the Genoese or the Roman fashion ; and when a nice little dish had to be got up, say at an hour's notice, the good-natured landlady of the house in which we occupied apartments made no objection to my going down into the kitchen and dressing the article wanted. Indeed, the good woman would often, in a case of boiling—that awful boiling!—lift the saucepan on and off the fire with her own hands ; and, in return for her kindness, I would try next day to teach her how to make an omelette—an attempt, however, in which, as a rule, she dismally failed. The British people have done mighty things in the course of their history ; they have created a vast empire in India and established a Greater Britain at the antipodes ; they beat Napoleon ;

practically invented the steam-engine and rail-roads ; actually invented penny postage and perforated postage-stamps ; but they have never, nationally, been able to make omelettes properly, and never will do so, I opine.

There were occasions, however, when my parent wished to give a more than usually elaborate dinner ; and on these occasions I used to be sent with a market basket—a horrible wicker pannier, dear readers, with a circular lid, with two flaps opening at the middle, and a semi-circular handle—to a French restaurant in Marylebone Street, Regent Street. That was when we were living in the Quadrant. The restaurant was known, if I remember aright, as the New Slaughter's Coffee House ; the Old Slaughter's, as all readers of *Vanity Fair* are aware, was in St. Martin's Lane, and the New was kept by a Frenchman of the name of Fricour. I never, to my remembrance, was taken to dine at this house of entertainment ; but over and over again have I been sent thither to interview the cook and to purchase such delicacies as John Dory à la crème or *en ravigote*, salmon with Mazarine sauce, soles à

la Normande, filet de bœuf à la Jeanne d'Arc, ducklings à la Chartres, pheasant à la Corsaire, vol-au-vent de riz de veau, côtelettes de mouton à la Soubise, all piping hot, which, carefully placed between plates, were bestowed in the abhorred market basket.

I always had a rooted, although perfectly irrational, hatred of sweetbreads and of kidneys, two dishes of which our Italian guests were passionately fond; and I do believe that it was owing to the frequency with which I had to obtain these viands from Fricour's that I learned to abominate that which most persons consider as very delicate and tasty articles of food. The *chef* at Fricour's was a very fat, wry man, of about fifty, with a merrily-twinkling eye. I never knew his name; but in process of time we grew quite friendly. I can see him, now, in his full suit of white, his long knife stuck in his girdle, and his white, quadrangular cap stuck rakishly on one side of his head. Sometimes, if the afternoon was very warm, I would find him taking just a breath of air at the kitchen entrance to the restaurant; and at these times, for fear of catching cold, he would always have a table

napkin tied loosely round his neck. He was a harmonious *chef*, too, and would frequently sing to me, while he was attending to my needs, snatches from a French song called, I think, *Le vin à quat' sous*. One other peculiarity of his I remember very well; and that was his habit of administering back-handed slaps on the face to his assistants, not excluding the kitchen-maids. These females would yelp a little, but no harm seemed to be done; and the *chef* himself would occasionally confidentially inform me that it was impossible to govern a kitchen properly *sans une pluie de gifles*—without a shower of slaps.

I scarcely think that the market-basket excursions, at the period when we lived in the Quadrant, were so grievously afflictive to me as they were when we resided in the upper part of Regent Street, close to the Oxford Circus. It was then my duty, when we had visitors who had to be regaled in an exceptionally elaborate manner, to take the horrible basket to Verrey's restaurant in Regent Street. I suppose there was a real Verrey fifty-five years ago, who was the founder of the famous restaurant which still


bears his name, and prospers. Verrey was, I apprehend, a Swiss ; and he has often been erroneously confounded with an even more famous restaurateur in the Palais Royal in Paris—Véry, to wit. The Palais Royal restaurateur started in business as early as 1805.

With Verrey's cooking in Regent Street I made, of course, a very close acquaintance ; but I was not admitted to the kitchen ; and it was a waiter at the back entrance who took my modest order and brought me the *plats* to be placed in the hideous market basket. How I loathed it ! How I slunk to and from the eating-house with the burden that choked the spring of my young life ! I have no hesitation, now, in candidly confessing that one golden summer afternoon, returning from Verrey's with my accursed incubus, I sat down on the steps under the portico of a grimy church in Regent Street and burst out crying. I was comforted, curiously enough, by an Italian image boy ; for the portico in question was at that epoch a favourite resting-place for the little swarthy lads who used to carry on their heads trays exhibiting plaster-casts of Queen Victoria,

Napoleon Bonaparte, Shakespeare, Malibran, the Duke of Wellington, the Dying Gladiator, the Three Graces, and Mr. Daniel O'Connell. I spoke to the image boy in his own tongue; but whether it was that circumstance or the savoury odours evolving from the dishes in the basket that made him treat me fair, I am unaware. I am glad to say, however, that I reached home with the contents of the basket intact. I am thoroughly persuaded that no feeling of harshness—to say nothing of cruelty—actuated my parent in sending me out on these, to me, agonising errands. Not one child in a thousand, perhaps, is entirely understood by its parents; and I daresay that I was rather irritatingly difficult to be comprehended.

Touching another cook of my acquaintance in the days of my boyhood, I may say a few words before I pass to the more celebrated *chefs* whom I knew in my adolescence. We never resided in the immediate neighbourhood of Leicester Square; else, when the operatic celebrities were good enough to take pot-luck with us, I might have been despatched with that woeful basket either to Pagliano's Hotel in

Leicester Square itself, an old-fashioned edifice, which had once been the house of William Hogarth, but which was pulled down to make room for Archbishop Tenison's School; or, perchance, I might have been bidden to wend my way to Bertolini's Restaurant—the Hôtel Newton, I think it was called—in St. Martin's Street. The last-named establishment was kept by a Mr. Bertolini, a very worthy Italian, long domiciled in England, who contrived, I believe, to make a handsome fortune, long before the days of the Gattis and Monicos. The rumour ran that he had a handsome country house, and rode to hounds with the county families; but, whatever may have been the extent of his prosperity, it did not prevent him from showing the most sedulous attention to all his guests, whether they dined simply or sumptuously. It was very rarely, between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, that I could afford a banquet at Bertolini's, but I liked to go there when I had sufficient cash, for the reason that the Hôtel Newton was the only place with which I was then acquainted where Italian, as well as French, cookery flourished.




There was another and more powerful incentive to my occasionally patronising the house. It was to a considerable extent the resort of the wits and the wags who, in the evening, habitually foregathered at the Café de l'Europe in the Haymarket; and there, at Bertolini's, I think I met one day Mr. Charles Dance, a once well-known dramatist. He asked me what I was doing; and I replied that I was trying my hand at about half-a-dozen different callings, in the endeavour to 'earn a livelihood; but that, on the whole, not very much success had attended my efforts. Then and there he sat down and wrote for me a letter to Shirley Brooks. Shirley gave me a cordial welcome and sent me to Albert Smith, who then lived in Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road.

Albert, in the year 1847, was editing a comic monthly periodical called *The Man in the Moon*, in conjunction with Angus Bethune Reach; and the joint editors engaged me to make comic designs on wood for *The Man in the Moon* aforesaid. I need scarcely say that, with the proceeds of the first cheque I received

for my drawings, I dined quite festively at Bertolini's.

Hungerford Market, which disappeared for ever in 1863, when it was demolished to make room for the West-End terminus of the South-Eastern Railway and the Charing Cross Hotel, was to me, in the days of my youth, one of the most interesting places in London, I knew the history of the locality by heart—from the ghastly story of Dame Alice Hungerford, who, in the reign of Henry VIII., was hanged at Tyburn for the cruel murder of her stepson, to the tale of the burning of Hungerford House in 1669 through the carelessness of a maidservant, who was sent to take a candle off a bunch, which she did by burning the wick off, and so set the whole mansion in a blaze. It was the property of Sir Edward Hungerford, the super-refined beau who gave £500 for a periwig, and who, after having squandered a princely fortune, died a poor Knight of Windsor in Queen Anne's reign. The market which I knew was not the ugly, tumbledown building with a pent-house roof, contemptuously alluded to by John Thomas Smith, the author of the delightful "Book for



a Rainy Day," but the heavy, pseudo-Italian structure built by Fowler, the architect of Covent Garden Market. In the upper storey there were three avenues, all roofed, in one block; and although Billingsgate proved in the long run too powerful for its West-End rival, the business done at Hungerford in the sale of fish was very considerable; and there were also well-stocked shops and stalls for the sale of butcher's meat, poultry, game, fruit, and vegetables. On the basement floor of the market was a large building, commonly known as the "French Church," from its having been used as a place of worship by the Huguenot refugees who fled to England after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Then it became a Charity School for the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields. In 1850 the premises had fallen into a wretchedly dilapidated condition, and they were acquired by some speculative persons, who, in view of the approaching Exhibition of the Industries of all Nations to be held in Hyde Park, re-erected the building in the basement as a tavern and music hall. The speculation, I believe, was a disastrous one; but, whatever

might be the fortunes of Hungerford, the place itself was always full of the liveliest attractions for me.

There is to most minds something irresistibly fascinating in a market, whatever may be the kind of commodities dispensed in the emporium. Socrates, it is true, when he was taken into the Agora, merely remarked, "How many things are there here which I do not want?" But then the son of Sophroniscus was a philosopher; and I cannot afford to be philosophical, even if I had that gift. Hungerford, consequently, never failed to amuse and please me. There was the parlour of the Swan Tavern to begin with, where mysterious London eccentrics—the race seems to have almost died out by this time—used to meet in occult conclave, saying little, but drinking cooling draughts of old ale, smoking the longest of clay pipes, and reading newspapers which, from their yellowness and raggedness, might have been the *Ledgers* and *Postboys* of the early Georgian era. On a summer afternoon the parlour at the Swan was one of the coolest and shadiest retreats into which you could dive from the feverish

buzzing and brawling of town life, the jarring of wheels and the confusion of tongues at Charing Cross ; and in that parlour I have made many curious acquaintances whose names I never knew, but from communion with whom I learnt many things.

There was a man who had a grievance—most probably a wholly imaginary one—against a certain learned judge, and who followed his lordship about the streets, and when he came in and out of his house, so persistently, that at last he was given over to the police for wilfully annoying the judicial functionary whom he conceived to have wronged him. He must have had some small means ; for he told me that he made it a rule to purchase every Act of Parliament and every Blue Book and Parliamentary Paper that was issued from the offices of the Queen's printers, so soon as ever those not ordinarily very exciting publications made their appearance. There was another individual of mildewed appearance, who, winter and summer alike, always wore a large cloak with a stand-up collar of what used to be known as "grey poodle." Nowadays it would be dubbed astrachan. He

was much given to devouring dressed crab, having purchased the crustacean at one of the fish-stalls in the adjacent market. The landlady of the tavern, to whom he was well known, willingly supplied him with the oil and vinegar and the condiments which he required.

The quantity of dressed crab, washed down by ginger beer and hollands, which the man in the cloak habitually consumed, used first to astonish and afterwards to alarm me. I always had a horror of crab as an article of food; and every moment I expected to see the cadaverous visage of the man in the mildewed mantle bloom forth in dark purple spots, or otherwise present itself in an aspect menacing the proximate dissolution of the unholy feeder; but my friend in the cloak, when he was not eating crab and swallowing draughts of ginger-beer and gin from a tall pewter pot, was amicably communicative, and had a great deal to say that was worth attentively listening to. Profound erudition does not always wear a college cap and gown. So far as I could make out, the crab-devourer was a ripe Oriental scholar; and, indeed, one day he proposed to teach me Arabic

if I would teach him French in return. I did not get further than the Arabic alphabet, and the man in the cloak did not make much progress in the Gallic tongue beyond: *Comment vous portez-vous?* and *Il est quatre heures et demie*. He was fond of repeating the latter phrase, possibly because half-past four p.m. was usually the time when he began to devote himself to dressed crab and ginger-beer *panaché* with gin.

One afternoon, in the autumn of 1850, I was strolling through Hungerford Market with my brother. We had had a ramble into Lambeth Marsh and had returned by way of Brunel's poetically graceful aerial suspension bridge, which now spans the Avon at Clifton. We had regaled on "gauffres," hot and hot, cooked by an industrious Italian, who had formerly, it was whispered, been a brigand, and ultimately took to stereotyping, and who kept a little hut for the sale of those crisp delicacies in a street by the side of the market going down to the river. I can still see the bubbling batter being poured into the moulds and scent the odour of the cooked "gauffres," as they were swiftly baked over a charcoal fire. Then I promised my relative to

Villiers?

take him to the Swan and introduce him to the man in the cloak.

But, just as we were beginning to wend our way Swanward, my eye lighted on a gentleman who was bargaining for lobsters at one of the shops in the Central Avenue. "Who can that extraordinary individual be?" I asked my brother. The stranger was a stoutish, tallish gentleman, a little past middle age, with closely-cropped grey hair and a stubbly grey moustache; and, but for his more than peculiar costume, he might have been mistaken for the riding-master of a foreign circus, who had been originally in the army. He wore a kind of paletôt of light camlet cloth, with voluminous lappels and deep cuffs of lavender watered silk; very baggy trousers, with a lavender stripe down the seams; very shiny boots, and quite as glossy a hat; his attire being completed by tightly-fitting gloves, of the hue known in Paris as *beurre frais*—that is to say, light yellow. All this you may think was odd enough; but an extraordinary oddity was added to his appearance by the circumstance that every article of his attire, save, I suppose, his gloves and boots, was cut on what

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dressmakers call a "bias," or as he himself, when I came to know him well, used to designate as *à la zoug-zoug*. He must have been the terror of his tailor, his hatter, and his maker of cravats and underlinen; since he had, to all appearance, an unconquerable aversion from any garment which, when displayed on the human figure, exhibited either horizontal or perpendicular lines. His very visiting-cards, his cigar-case, and the handle of his cane took slightly oblique inclinations.

He evidently knew all about shell-fish; for he took the lobsters up one by one, critically scanned them, poised them in one hand after the other to ascertain their weight, examined their claws, rapped them on their back, poked their sides, and offered terms for them in a mildly authoritative tone; terms which were at length, and not very ruefully, accepted by the fishmonger, who was possibly desirous of keeping on the best of terms with the foreign gentleman whose hat, coat, cravat, and pantaloons were all so studiously awry. "Who is that?" said my brother, repeating my question. "Why, of all people on earth who could that be but Soyer? How do you do, Soyer?" It was in good sooth the

noted Alexis Soyer, erst *chef* of the Reform Club, to whom I was then and there introduced, and of whom I have had already had occasion to speak in the chapter on Thackeray. He had then, I believe, just quitted the service of the palatial establishment in Pall Mall, where a handsome salary, and the fees which he was permitted to take from "improvers," brought him an income, it was said, of not less than a thousand a year. There was not the slightest ill-feeling between himself and the committee when he left; and many members of the club, including Thackeray, Sir John Easthope, Mr. Fox Maule (afterwards Lord Panmure), Mr. Edward Ellice, and Lord Marcus Hill, remained his fast friends. Alexis Soyer, however, was a very ambitious artist, and when I first met him was on the point of organising a grand culinary enterprise on his own account, of which enterprise I shall have incidentally to speak presently.

In addition to this undertaking he was, like Mr. Rudyard Kipling, a dealer in "many inventions." His "Gastronomic Regenerator," a costly cookery book, of which he took care to preserve the copyright, brought him in a

large annual income; and even larger yearly gains accrued to him from the sale of his "Modern Housewife or Ménagère," which comprised, by the way, a bill of fare for a nursery dinner, which, Sir Erasmus Wilson said, was one of the most valuable pages that he ever read on the subject of diet, and was "calculated to confer an everlasting benefit on society." Then, again, he had devised numerous condiments and sauces, among which I especially remember "Soyer's Relish," which was sold in vast quantities by a well-known firm of manufacturers in London, who paid him liberal royalties for his recipes. He once told me in confidence what the Relish was made of, and I committed the prescription to paper; but I am sorry to say that I lost it long years ago. I remember, however, that the foundation of the sauce was garlic.

Soyer invited my brother and myself to supper that very evening. He occupied, at the time, the upper part of a house in the dim regions of Soho—a district which still retains many of its Gallic attributes, but which, in 1850, was almost as French as the Rue Montmartre.

French *charcutiers*, French restaurants, hotels, barbers and hairdressers, newsvendors, circulating libraries, and cigar-shops encompassed his dwelling; while the floors over the French shops were tenanted by French tailors, milliners, and dressmakers. The rooms occupied by Soyer, who was a widower, were, with one exception, very plainly furnished. The exception was in the instance of a number of very able and tasteful oil paintings by his deceased wife, a pupil of a celebrated Flemish painter named Simonau, who had been trained in the studio of the celebrated Baron Gros. Soyer was married in 1836; but six years afterwards his wife, still in the bloom of her youth, being in delicate health, died, literally terrified to death by a memorable thunderstorm.

All those who have visited Kensal Green must have seen the monument to Madame Soyer. In one of the panels are visible, under glass, the palette and brushes of the lamented artist. A pretty circumstance connected with the inauguration of the monument at Kensal Green was that a wreath of laurel was placed on the pedestal by the charming *danseuse*,

Fanny Cerrito, a daughter of Terpsichore whose goodness equalled her genius and her renown, and who yet lives, I hope, as Madame St. Léon. The wreath was made additionally interesting by the fact that it had formed part of a crown which had been placed on Cerrito's brow by an Austrian Archduke, on the stage of La Scala at Milan. One other minor item connected with this monument remains to be mentioned. The question of a suitable inscription on the tomb had arisen, and someone—I am sure I do not know whether it was Jerrold, or Thackeray, or Monckton Milnes, or Bernal Osborne, or Disraeli—suggested that the epitaph could be well completed in two words, "*Soyer Tranquille*." In a by no means imposingly-furnished upper room, in a small street, the name of which has hopelessly drifted away from me, in Soho, Soyer had installed that which he proudly called his "Kitchen at Home."

It is in one of Congreve's comedies, I think, that one of the characters taunts a lady with having taken her "out of a shop no bigger than a birdcage"; and, as a matter of fact, Soyer's apartments were not of much more commanding

dimensions than would belong to a series of moderate-sized aviaries; but the eminently assimilative and inventive nature of the man had enabled him to set up in two or three little exiguous dens on the top floor, a miniature kitchen and larder and scullery, as complete in their way as the wonderful kitchen and annexes which he had arranged for the Reform Club. He had his roasting range, his oven, his screen and plate-warmer; his *bain-marie* pan heated by water from the adjacent boiler, his "hot-plate," his seasoning box and fish sauce-box; his refrigerator, and his knife-cleaning machine; his dressers and tables, and plate rack. The larder was as completely furnished as the kitchen; and on the floor beneath was his dining-room. I remember that, after we had consumed an admirable supper, which he had cooked with his own hands, with the assistance of a very small but obedient and handy Irish servant girl, with shoes hopelessly down at heel, he brought forth that which seemed to me to be a kind of conjuring apparatus. It was his "magic stove." A chop or a steak was placed on a metal tripod, of which the top was solid or barred, just as it was intended that

the meat should be fried or broiled. At a little distance from this tripod, but quite independent of it, was a spirit lamp, and by means of some ingenious blow-pipe arrangement, a prolonged tongue of flame, so to speak, was projected horizontally from the lamp into the tripod and under the frying-pan or the gridiron, as the case might be, where the flame assumed a circular shape, and cooked the meat above to a nicety. Soyer, indeed, was continually inventing something, and his not altogether unreasonable anxiety that due publicity should be attained by his inventions led to his being very frequently disparaged as a charlatan.

That there may have been a slight spice of the *poseur* in his composition it would be idle to deny; but his foible in this direction was a perfectly harmless one, and it was more than compensated by the real talent of the man, by his great capacity for organisation, and by the manliness, simplicity, and uprightness of his character. He was, in more than one sense, a public benefactor; and at the time of the Irish potato famine, he crossed St. George's Channel to give practical and gratuitous instruction to

the poor in cooking cheap food other than the potato ; and after the failure of Soyer's Symposium, the sumptuous Restaurant for all Nations, which, in the year of the Great Exhibition, he opened at Gore House, Kensington, he undertook a journey to the Crimea, and not only at Balaclava, but at Scutari, achieved wonders in improving the cooking of the soldiers' rations and in arranging better scales of dietary for the military hospitals.

His services gained for him the warm commendations of the Commander-in-Chief of the Army in the Crimea and the amicable appreciation of Florence Nightingale ; but I am not aware that any honorific distinction was conferred on him by the British Government, or that any kind of pension or annuity was settled on him. One of his last appearances in public was at the United Service Institution, where he delivered a lecture on "Camp and Barrack Cookery." Very soon afterwards, worn out by hard labour and still further enfeebled by the Crimean climate, he died. He was only a cook ; but I shall always cherish the remembrance of my friendship with him,

not only because I sincerely admired his character, but because I consider him to have been a thoroughly capable and refined culinary artist. Peace to his *manes*!

A few years afterwards it was my fortune to make the acquaintance of another cook almost as celebrated as Soyer. This was Charles Edmé Francatelli, who had been *chef* to her Majesty the Queen, and whose cookery-book I consider to be quite as practical and quite as refined as Soyer's "Regenerator," while it is devoid of those bizarre and fantastic episodes with which Soyer occasionally spiced his pages. Francatelli was a very intelligent, courteous person, whose only artistic fault was that he had an exceeding weakness for the use of truffles, with which, often without rhyme or reason, he pertinaciously stuffed his dishes. As a rule, three-fourths of these costly tubers have lost their scent and savour by the time that they have reached an English kitchen, and are practically worthless; but Francatelli could not be dissuaded from concocting *plats truffés*. My relations with him were amicable, but not of the nature of close

friendship. In fact, I owned in a business sense about one-twelve-hundred-and-fiftieth part of him, since he was *chef* at a club in Pall Mall of which I was elected a member two-and-thirty years ago.

CHAPTER XX.

COSTUMES OF MY INFANCY.

Boys in Petticoats—A "Skeleton Suit"—In Uniform—Schoolboy Attire—A Vanished Garment—The Carlist War and One of its Effects—A Gorgeous Costume.

I FORGET whether it is in the "Almanach des Gourmands" of Grimod de la Reynière, or in the works of some other writer on gastronomy, that there occurs a graphic and almost terrific episode in which an epicure, who has lived not wisely but too well, sees in a vision a procession of all the good things which he has eaten and drunk during a prolonged career of gormandising. The procession winds its way down a mountain-side; and at the foot of the declivity is, naturally, the Grave. Oxen by the drove; sheep by the flock; swine by the herd; fruit and vegetables by the waggon-load; wine, beer, and spirits by the hogshead; sugar by the cask; flour by the sack; butter by hundreds of firkins; eggs by hundreds of boxes, and milk by hundreds of cans; salt and spices, coffee, tea,

and chocolate by the ton—all these comestibles pass before the eye of the dyspeptic, and it is to be hoped penitent, *bon vivant*; while, above, the sky is darkened by pheasants and partridges, grouse, larks, ortolans, and plover; and flocks of geese, turkeys, and fowls hover, strut, and waddle in the outskirts of the throng, and the merry brown hares leap in and out. A sorry dream, at least when you are uncomfortably aware that in all probability there are not many more succulent luncheons and dinners in store for you!

With feelings happily partaking more of amused curiosity than of remorse might an elderly person review in his mind's eye the varying costumes which he has worn from his infancy downwards. Of course, I would not for one moment venture to suggest that such a retrospect should be undertaken by a lady; for what fair daughter of Eve would care to remind herself of the toilettes with which she embellished her elegant form say forty or fifty years ago? Nothing is more common than to hear a lady, when she is turning over the leaves of an old Book of the Fashions, exclaim, "And is it possible that such frightful things as those were ever

worn?" In many instances the fair critics may, at a remote period, the existence of which they have totally forgotten, have worn the frightful things themselves. However, the sterner sex can afford to have more retentive memories; and I am not in the least ashamed to confess that the earliest infantile costume of which I have a distinct recollection was donned at Brighton very early in the 'thirties. Indeed, I think that it was on the morning after a terrible storm; and that, looking from the window of my little bedroom in Manchester Street, Marine Parade, I could see that what is now known as the Old Chain Pier, but which was then quite a juvenile institution, had been struck by lightning and seriously damaged. I can see now, mentally, the severed cables bent and twisted by the lightning, swinging to and fro in the morning blast.

Children at the present time are put into sailors' garb or into little vests and knickerbockers at so very early an age that it is by no means uncommon to meet tiny Jack Tars, or tiny Rip van Winkles, or Lilliputian Highlanders of three and four; but in the 'thirties small boys were kept in petticoats

until an age when their appearance in such a garb would, in these days, be thought highly absurd. The short skirts which future soldiers, lawyers, doctors, and clergymen wore till they were six or seven years old, were supplemented by an abominably ugly garment called a pinafore; not in any way resembling the pretty little blouses which tiny urchins are at present put into, but hideous gabardines of brown holland, which were tied at the shoulders by tapes.

I had been emancipated from this juvenile *sandenito* just before the occurrence of the great storm; and on the morning when I beheld the shattered chains of the suspension pier at Brighton I was brought triumphantly down to breakfast by my nurse, and exhibited to the family circle in all the pride of what was known as a "skeleton suit." In a word, I was "breeched;" and in the right-hand pocket of my nether garments was placed, according to the kindly custom of that time, a bright new shilling. The coin, however, did not long retain its lustre, which I very soon tarnished by fumbling it, by the hour at a time, between my hot, moist little fingers. The "skeleton" suit

comprised a cloth jacket, with two rows of flat gilt buttons. Three rows would have made the wearer look like a page-boy. There was also a zone of buttons encircling the jacket, just at the termination of the basket of the ribs; and to this zone were affixed the pantaloons, for they really could not be properly called trousers. They buttoned over, instead of under, the jacket, and were ridiculously short, so as to display white socks and "pumps."

In summer-time the wretched little slaves of a preposterous fashion wore nether garments of pink and white striped nankeen, or of white duck; but in all cases the costume was completed by a prodigiously wide linen collar with a plaited frill. The jacket had no pockets, and the equipment was destitute of a waistcoat; so that the unhappy little urchin who had just been "breeched" was constrained to turn his two lateral pockets into very cupboards or haversacks, the contents of which comprised such useful articles as a pocket-handkerchief and the key of that beloved box, full of unconsidered trifles, in the possession of which the smallest of children who can read and write take an infinite delight;

while, among the objects of ornament or luxury were, possibly, a marble or two, a piece of india-rubber, some coppers, a scrap of hardbake or toffy wrapped in paper, a few nuts in the season, an apple (partially munched) in summer, and a bit of slate pencil all the year round. I imagine that if anybody had given me a watch in those days I should have been constrained to add it to the miscellaneous contents of my trousers' pockets; but in the reign of the Sailor King not one boy in a thousand, not being a little Prince, had, under the age of ten, such a thing as a watch. I have a notion that when I attended a day school kept by a kind lady, named Scott, somewhere in the region of where there is now the Montpelier Road, I excited considerable envy among my youthful colleagues through this same "skeleton" suit.

You know what form envy takes among small boys and among, I am grieved to say, small girls. Envy manifests itself in the pulling of the hair, the tweaking of the ears, the accidental—accidental, of course—treading on the toes of the envied infant, and the administration of those miscellaneous "nips and

bobs" of which poor little Lady Jane Grey had such a liberal allowance at the hands of her noble papa and mamma. However, my school-fellows were themselves gradually promoted into the wearing of skeleton suits, and I experienced no more nips or bobs; and I daresay that, with my newly-breeched comrades, I was quite ready to envy, pinch, tease, and otherwise maltreat a particularly plump and squab-figured boy—he must have been ten—who scandalised us all one morning by making his appearance in a round jacket, a white waistcoat and trousers, and a blue silk neckerchief tied in a sailor's knot. He had a bad time, that boy, I warrant you.

There was another very juvenile costume which I remember, consisting of a kind of tunic with a broad belt round the waist and a buckle. Socks were worn with this raiment; and the head-gear was a cloth cap with a glazed peak, and a tassel hanging on one side by a silken cord.

In the summer of 1839 a strange transformation took place in my dress. I went to Paris, as I have mentioned earlier in these pages; and, being a boy at a public school, I

was bound to wear the authorised uniform of the establishment. Picture to yourself, if you please, a small boy of eleven suddenly deprived of his tunic, his large frilled collar, and his cap with the peak and tassel, and thrust into a tightly-fitting, single-breasted, closely-buttoned tail coat, which, but that its hue was either green or chocolate, bore a grotesque resemblance to the policeman's coatee as worn in the early days of the Force. My likeness to a police constable, drawn small, was enhanced by the circumstance that I was made to wear a tall hat, although it had no oil-cloth covering to the crown, and no protecting bands of leather down the sides; otherwise, with a stiff stand-up collar and straight-cut trousers, with a tiny strip of scarlet down the outer seams, I might well have passed for a duodecimo edition of a London "bobby" slightly Gallicised. Coming back to England to become an English schoolboy, I was made to adopt a style of dress of which a good many patterns are still popular in boyland. The round jacket, vest, and trousers, the neck-tie and the lie-down, highly-glazed shirt collar of the Eton boy was, about 1843, largely worn in schools all

over England; only the Eton boy wore continuously a high hat; whereas, in middle-class seminaries, the "stove-pipe" was reserved for Sundays and such whole holidays as those on which we used to be conveyed in brakes and waggonettes to Richmond or Greenwich or Hampton Court, or even Windsor, for a treat. On other days the cap was worn, and at the particular academy where I finished my boyish education we generally wore a navy cap of blue cloth, with a gold lace band.

I have no remembrance of having seen in my childhood any schoolboys wearing any kind of wideawake or soft hat; nor was the compromise between a frock-coat and a jacket—the "cutaway" or Newmarket coat—ever assumed by lads under twelve. It should, nevertheless, be noted that one article of attire worn between 1835 and 1848, not only by grown-up people, but by quite little boys, has wholly vanished from civilian society in England. This was the Cloak. I do not mean the Inverness capes which gentlemen now don with tolerable frequency over evening dress; the cloak which I wore in the forties was a regular Spanish *capa*.

Something like it had been popular in France a few years previously ; the garment being cut in precise accordance with the lines of the Roman toga, as laid down by that eminent reformer of theatrical costume in France, the famous tragedian Talma. In England the circular-cut cloak was patronised for widely different reasons.

In the Spanish Peninsula a fierce war, for the succession to the Spanish Crown, was raging between the partisans of Don Carlos on one side and Doña Isabel de Borbon on the other. The Liberal party in England generally sympathised with the Isabelinos, or Christinos, as they were commonly called, after the Queen-mother and Regent, Christina ; and the Liberal Government had sent out, to assist the Christinos, a numerous body of troops, to which was given the name of the British Legion, and which was under the command of the gallant Sir De Lacy Evans. The achievements of the Legion in Spain were not very successful ; they fought on many occasions with great bravery, but the Spanish Constitutional Government did not treat the Legionaries with exceptional liberality ; the commissariat was from first to last miserably

deficient, and the men had the utmost difficulty in obtaining their pay. I can well remember, so late as 1850, seeing one-legged men, in the ragged scarlet uniform of the Legion, sweeping street crossings; while one-armed men in the same tattered panoply used to beg in the public thoroughfares. Very soon rank impostors took up that which, for a season, was a rather remunerative form of mendicancy; and rogues who had never been nearer Spain than the "Spaniards" tavern at Hampstead took to wearing cast-off Legion uniforms, which were plentiful and cheap enough in the second-hand clothes shops of Dudley Street, Holywell Street, and West Street, Smithfield. The officers of the Mendicity Society eventually managed, however, to run these rascals to earth; but meanwhile the influence of the contest in Spain began to be felt somewhat extensively in London, owing to the numbers of English gentlemen who had visited the "Africa which begins at the Pyrenees"—either in a military capacity, or as artists or newspaper correspondents—and who brought home not only Spanish circular-cut cloaks, but the Spanish mode of draping themselves therein.

The late Mr. Gruneisen, a distinguished journalist, who in later life was the secretary of the Conservative Land Society, wore a cloak. He had been war correspondent of a London daily paper in Spain, and, being on the Carlist side, was within an ace of being shot as a spy when he was taken prisoner by the Christinos. Lord Ranelagh, who had also campaigned with the Carlists, wore a cloak of the same fashion after his return home, and so did Mr. G. F. Sargent, a well-known graphic contributor to the *Penny Magazine*, to whom must be ascribed the honour of having been the first of that indefatigable army of artistic war correspondents of whom Mr. William Simpson, Mr. Sydney Hall, Mr. Frederick Villiers, and Mr. Melton Prior have since been such distinguished types. I am afraid that the gentlemen who returned from Spain very soon forgot the art of draping their cloaks in the genuine Romano-Iberian mode, such as you may see it practised all the year round by the mysterious, swarthy, and cigarette-smoking individuals who loaf round the fountain in the Puerta del Sol at Madrid.

The cloak, however, remained. I wore

one when I was fourteen ; and I half fancy that the mantle in question had been in the army, and had been cut down to suit my stature. At all events, it was of blue serge, and was lined with dingy scarlet. The collar was a stand-up one, and was secured by a gilt clasp.

One other sartorial aspect of my boyhood I recollect, in 1843 or 1844. I had a maiden cousin, the kindest, cheerfullest, tenderest little soul you can imagine, who, in her childhood, had absolutely been the heiress of a large sugar plantation swarming with slaves, in the West Indies : even as my own mother had been. My cousin, whenever she had the chance, used to delight in giving me a treat in the shape of an outing. I have escorted her, or rather she escorted me, to old Vauxhall, to the Surrey Zoological Gardens, to Kew and Richmond, and to the annual fêtes of the Royal Horticultural Society at Chiswick ; but the treat which she and I most heartily enjoyed was Grisi's benefit at Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket. The function usually took place towards the end of July. I will say nothing about the particular performance itself, since I only wish to complete this

slight tableau of the costumes of my infancy, when I describe the apparel which I wore on a well-remembered evening in the summer of 1843 or 1844.

A round jacket, colour navy blue ; black velvet collar, and lappels, turned back, of white damask ; flowing white shirt collar edged with lace, white silk necktie tied in a large bow, a *jabot*, or shirt-frill, protruding in a crescent form, like a table napkin folded by an expert French waiter, and in the centre of the bosom a brooch of garnets. Does anyone ever wear garnets now ? They say garnets are lucky stones. Then imagine very tight-fitting pantaloons of the same hue as the coat, speckled silk socks, and low shoes (brightly varnished) with large black silk bows.

The most conspicuous article in my costume I have reserved to be cited last ; I wore a wonderful waistcoat. It was known at home as the "flower-pot" waistcoat — being of lustrous poplin, or rather brocade, of blue silk, profusely embroidered with flowers of golden hue, the bouquets being tied and the waistcoat itself edged with gold thread. A most gorgeous garment, truly ; still, I am bound to acknowledge

that the gleaming fabric was part of a petticoat, which my mother had bought at a theatrical costumier's in Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane. I am of opinion that in that petticoat, with a bodice to match, and a black calash, my mother had played the parts of Deborah Woodcock in *Love in a Village* and Mrs. Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer*. At all events, I feel as fully persuaded that my "flower-pot" waistcoat had been on the stage, as that my out-of-door cloak had been in the army. Who had worn that brocaded petticoat, before it came into my mother's possession, I have of course no means of ascertaining. Perhaps it had been worn at the coronation of George IV.; nay, brocades wear a very long time; my "flower-pot" vest had perchance once formed part of the dress of one of the beautiful Miss Chudleighs, or of Molly Lepel, or of Lady Betty Germaine. Why not? I went to a concert at a great palazzo at Venice not long ago, and some of the ladies, who were members of the antique aristocracy of the city, came in brocade dresses which, I was told, were two hundred years old; and they—the dresses I mean—did not look so very faded.

CHAPTER XXI.

HANDWRITING OF MY FRIENDS.

Autograph Prices—Character in Handwriting—Flourishes Classified—The Origin of a "Lasso"—Charles Dickens' "Forked Lightning" Flourish—Compliments from Lord Brougham—His Handwriting—Mr. Beresford Hope's—Mr. Walter Thornbury's—Thackeray's—Douglas Jerrold's—Sir Arthur Helps'—Charles Reade's—Mr. Gye's—"Hans Breitmann's."

I HAVE been acquainted, in the course of a protracted career, with a great multitude of celebrated people of both sexes; and I must have received, during the last forty years, several reams of correspondence signed by all sorts and conditions of famous or notorious, and, in some instances, infamous folk. Yet I possess at present only a very meagre gathering of autographs; and it is with difficulty that I can realise the amount of gratification, if any, which can be derived by the autograph-hunter from his indefatigable quest of other people's signatures. It is useful, however, now and again, to consult the catalogue of some professional dealer in autographs—highly useful, indeed, on

Shakespeare's "Take Physic, Pomp" principle—especially when you find a signature of Frederick Louis, Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, father of Helen Louisa, married to Ferdinand Duke of Orleans, son of King Louis Philippe, offered for seven shillings and sixpence; whereas a four-page letter of your own, expressing your views on the study of classical form in art, is offered for eighteenpence. In the same catalogue the autographic value of Frederick, Duke of York, is three shillings; and for this sum is procurable the signature of Mr. Galignani, the once eminent Parisian publisher. The sign manual of the gallant Admiral, Lord Exmouth, who bombarded Algiers, goes for half-a-crown, which is the selling price of the elder William Farren; but a letter from Colonel Marcus Despard is quoted at nine and sixpence—the price asked for a letter from Charles Dickens to his schoolfellow and early friend, Thomas Mitton. To be sure, it was the gallant Colonel Despard's fate to close a distinguished military career by being hanged, drawn, and decapitated at Horsemonger Lane Gaol for the crime of high treason.

As for Mr. Gladstone, an autograph note of his in the third person only fetches half-a-crown; but twenty-five lines in the autograph of Thomas Hood, addressed to Sir Walter Scott, may be considered cheap at half-a-guinea. Altogether, the traffic in autographs, like the passion for possessing them, is to me a mystery.

Again, it is possible that the very slight value which I attach, as a rule, to autographs, may be due to the circumstance that I am an entire disbeliever in the so-called science of "graphology," although I have read with much interest a book, published not long since, called "Handwriting and Expression," translated from the French of M. J. Crépieux-Jamin by Mr. John Holt Schooling. I am not at all open to the conviction that—save in very rare instances—the handwriting offers any trustworthy evidence as to the writer's character; and, in defence of my scepticism in this regard, I may say something very briefly and, I hope, modestly, about my own calligraphy, which, as a good many people are aware, is peculiar. I write a very small hand, which, some ten years ago, was very legible, but which is now rapidly becoming the

reverse. There are three reasons for this indistinctness: first, as a child I was for a long time quite blind, and when I recovered my sight I taught myself to write from a book in large print, Lord Lyttelton's "History of England." I remember very well drawing every particular character in the alphabet, large and small, capitals and minuscules, vertically and diagonally; and I daresay that, during the process of copying, I put my tongue out, and made the organ of speech follow the motion of my pen, just as you may have seen servant-maids do when they indite an epistle beginning, say: "Miss Sarah Jane Smith presents her compliments to Mrs. Soapsuds, and I must have more starch in my cuffs, which thank Goodness it leaves me at present."

The next reason for my writing a minute hand is, that in my early adolescence I scraped together sufficient money to apprentice myself to an engraver, and went conscientiously, not only through the artistic processes of my craft, but through the much humbler business of engraving bill-heads, and invoices, and visiting cards, backwards, on copper-plate. Finally,

my handwriting became habitually minute, because ever since my boyhood I have been in the habit of keeping extracts, commonplace books, and memoranda of every description ; and had I not written very small, I should have by this time several shelves groaning with elephant-folios full of my scribblings.

But we will come now, only for a moment, to the question of character in handwriting. I always append to my signature a kind of flourish—that which the French call a *paraphe* ; and I notice in “ Handwriting and Expression ” a list of these flourishes, including the “ lasso,” the “ forked lightning,” the “ arachnoid,” the “ snail,” the “ corkscrew,” and the “ wavy ” —a different human idiosyncrasy being assigned to each variety of flourish. Looking at the facsimiles of these flourishes, I find that I have a “ lasso ” *paraphe*, and, according to M. Crépieux-Jamin, the “ lasso ” flourish signifies “ defensiveness becoming aggressive.” As a random shot this is not a very bad one : seeing that I have generally had to defend something or somebody, and not unfrequently myself ; and I may have been occasionally

aggressive in resisting attack ; but it so happens that the lasso-like flourish was not an instinctive one, but that I deliberately adopted it from the signature of a French schoolmaster of mine, fifty-three years ago. His name was Hénon ; and I have one of his quarterly school bills before me, now, with a most portentous “lasso” after the final “n,” reaching a good inch and a half down the page. Possibly there may be relatives or schoolfellows of Charles Dickens alive who can account for the “forked lightning” horizontal zig-zag flourish which he always appended to his signature. This forked horizontal zig-zag appears under his name in the engraving of the portrait by Daniel Maclise; but, oddly enough, it happens that I possess a pirated copy of “*Oliver Twist*,” in which there is a signature unfamiliar to European eyes, published in New York, 1841. Even the illustrations by George Cruikshank are forged—and very cleverly too ; but the frontispiece is a portrait of Dickens as a very young man, with the signature “Boz,” with *one* horizontal stroke beneath, and no more. I have never seen an English copy of the portrait, and do not know

whether this "Boz" is a facsimile or an impudent invention.

Of the very many letters which, during a long course of years of close friendship, I received from the illustrious novelist, I have retained only one, and I find the solitary example pasted down—not by my hands I feel sure—in a vellum-bound account folio full, not only of autographs, but of caricatures of my friends and myself, cards of invitation, photographs, play-bills, and a letter written nearly a hundred years ago from Demerara by my maternal grandfather to my mother, then a little girl at school in England. Dickens's letter is dated from the office of *All the Year Round*, August 19th, 1868, and simply announces the enclosure of a cheque for fifteen pounds. The billet is written in the old familiar Stephens's dark blue ink, and the "forked lightning" flourish is as bold as ever. According to M. Crépieux-Jamin, Dickens's signature by this time should have grown irresolute; since he was in far from good health, and in less than two years afterwards he was dead.

I have not a single Thackeray in my possession; and for this bereavement I can

account, just as well as I am able to do for the almost total absence of communications in the hand of Charles Dickens. All my autograph letters from the two great writers whom I have named have been politely begged from me by public libraries and literary and scientific institutions in England and in the United States. Furthermore, I may hint that once in every seven years or so I yield to an uneasy conviction that I am about, at no great distance of time, to join the majority; and while I am under the influence of that which is perhaps only a temporary fit of hypochondria, I either give away some of my most valued autograph letters to my friends, or else I make a bonfire-royal of a couple of hundred letters or so.

I am glad, nevertheless, to say that I know the whereabouts—although I have it not in my own custody—of one at least of about a dozen letters which I received from Lord Brougham. The great orator and statesman was noted for the kindly encouragement which he was always ready to extend to young and struggling men of letters. It is many, many years since I first met him at a Mechanics' Institute soirée, at


Huddersfield, in Yorkshire. The Lord of Vaux was in the chair; and I had to make a speech. I have not the slightest remembrance of what the speech was about; and as I had never before set eyes on the famous ex-Chancellor, and I was sitting close to him, I own that I felt desperately frightened. I stumbled through my sentences somehow or another; and then the good old man shook me cordially by the hand and said some very kind things to me. A few weeks afterwards I received a letter from him in London asking me to come to a public meeting at St. James's Hall, on which occasion he was to preside. The meeting was to discuss the question of middle-class education; and he evidently expected a large attendance of the clergy, since, in a postscript, he remarked, "he did not wish the Bishops to have things all their own way." On the morning of the meeting I received another note from him asking me to call upon him, as early in the forenoon as I could, at his house in Grafton Street. The well-remembered mansion was at the bottom of the street, facing Bond Street. In a very dusty old dining-room I found the venerable statesman in

his customary attire of black body-coat and waistcoat, an immensely high black stock, and the historic checked trousers. By the way, Robert Brough, humorist, dramatist, and poet, used to say that the fluted columns of the exterior of the Church of the Madeleine, which are constructed on the "tambour" principle, the fluted shafts being not monolithic, but so many superposed discs of stone, always reminded him of Lord Brougham's trousers.

He had sent for me—so said the British Demosthenes—to give me a few hints on public speaking; and this he did, not only then, but on two subsequent occasions. It is, however, with the handwriting of this great Englishman, and not with his personal relations with me, that I have to deal. What his calligraphy in youth or in his maturity may have been like I do not know, but at the advanced age when I enjoyed the honour of his friendship, he wrote about the most execrably illegible and ungainly scrawl that, with one exception, I have ever gazed upon. The only simile which will serve to give my readers an idea of his "fist" is the very hackneyed one of a

spider dipped in ink being allowed to crawl over a sheet of paper. He always signed "H. Brougham," instead of "Brougham," just as the Earl of Rosebery signs "A. Rosebery." One other letter from the renowned statesman, who when he was "Harry Brougham" held the House of Commons in the hollow of his hand, had reference to a leading article which I wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* more than thirty years ago. The paper had reference to the expediency of appointing a Public Prosecutor, and this expediency Lord Brougham remarked that he "gravely doubted."

I have said that I know of one other sample of handwriting as shockingly illegible as that of Lord Brougham. It was the writing of the late Mr. Beresford Hope. Up and down, in and out, and round the corner, some of the letters standing on their heads, others "standing prostrate," as Lord Castlereagh put it—others apparently engaged in mortal combat with their next neighbours—the ultimate result, Chaos. That was the calligraphy, or the cacography, of worthy, clever Mr. Beresford Hope. The late Walter Thornbury, traveller, and historiographer, in



conjunction with Mr. E. Walford, of "Old and New London," also wrote a disastrously bad hand. The prevailing impression in your mind was that not ink, but a succession of small bomb-shells had been discharged from poor Walter's pen, and that these petards had exploded on the paper. On the whole, were I called upon to come into any court and make affidavit as to the handwriting of my literary friends, I should say that the finest calligrapher of all was Thackeray. He had two distinct handwritings: a cursive and slanting one, and a vertical or upright hand, in which every letter was distinctly formed. Both hands were, to my mind, inimitably beautiful.

Douglas Jerrold, as a letter-writer, wrote a bold, decisive hand; but his "copy" was in almost microscopically small characters. I have seen the bound manuscript of his strange novel, "A Man Made of Money;" and I doubt whether even a reader with powerful eyes could decipher that MS. without the aid of a magnifying glass. I find in the book of scraps to which I have alluded several very kind letters from

Sir Arthur Helps, the author of "Friends in Council." He wrote a typically official "fist," large, clear, decisive, and not devoid of symmetry. One communication, written in 1874, had reference to those very cruel devices—not yet, I am sorry to say, abandoned—for the torture of horses: the bearing-rein and the gag-bit. He wanted me to write something denouncing that which most people think to be a barbarous and useless practice; but I told him, in reply, that an anti-bearing-rein movement must, to have any chance of success, be initiated by the very highest classes in society; and in his letter in answer he wrote, "I am afraid you are right; we must begin with the duchesses. I have already had the audacity to try what I can do with them, and I must persevere." Next to Sir Arthur I find an invitation to dinner from dear old Charles Reade. A big, fighting, "hitting between the eyes" hand—a sprawl; but a giant's sprawl. He disdained to fold the pages of his letters, and went right across the sheet. Then do I chance on a note addressed to me in April, 1875, from the Royal Italian Opera, in a neat, delicate, almost feminine Italian hand,

signed "Fred Gye." I had sent him from Venice a note expressing the enthusiastic admiration which I felt for a young *prima donna* by the name of Albani, whom I had heard at the Fenice Theatre, on the occasion of a gala performance held in honour of the visit of the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria to Victor Emanuel, King of Italy. "I am delighted," writes Mr. Gye, "to see that you, as well as the Venetians, know how to appreciate the charming talent of Mademoiselle Albani, who," he adds, "is about to sing in the *Sonnambula*, at Covent Garden." Following Mr. Gye's is a letter of eight pages from Mr. Charles Godfrey Leland, otherwise "Hans Breitmann," a very constant correspondent of mine in days of yore. A fine, flowing, legible masculine hand, setting down things sensible and sagacious.



INDEX.

- Abbeville, i. 150
A'Beckett, Gilbert Abbot, i. 44;
 caricatured by the author, 88
Adams, Charles Francis, i. 214
Adams' Express Company, i. 233,
 234
Admiralty, The, semaphore on the
 roof of, i. 201; courtyard of, 201
Advertisement duties, and indigent
 publishers, ii. 65
Æneas, his meal on the Punic coast
 and his invitation from Queen
 Dido, ii. 209, 210
Ainsworth, Harrison, his "Jack
 Sheppard," ii. 157
Alamode beef dinners, ii. 202—204;
 the sauce served with, 203, 204
Alboni, Maria, in *Maria di Rohan* at
 Covent Garden Theatre, ii. 124—
 127; her picture by the author,
 126, 127
Alken, Henry, i. 99
Almonte, General Don Juan Né-
 pomucène, ii. 25, 26
America: Change in meaning of
 term "Democrats," i. 224;
 author's experience in the country,
 210—268; Century Club, 225;
 voyage from England thirty years
 ago, 213; lavish expenditure on
 entertainments during the war,
 and the issue of "greenbacks,"
 227—230; sleeping-cars and rail-
 way travelling, 230—234; Adams'
 Express Company, 233, 234;
 Custom House, 234—236; smug-
 gling, 236; spies, 236, 237;
 abuse between Federals and Con-
 federates, 237; steam-boat travel-
 ling, 239—241; the Federal army,
 241—248; patriotic lyrics of Con-
 federate army, 248
Americans: in Paris, i. 215, 216; in-
 justice done to them by English
 writers, 216; epithets applied to
 the author, 218, 219
Amozoc, Spurs of, ii. 4
Anderson, Professor, ii. 121, 123
Anecdotes and Incidents: Thack-
 eray's remark to the "Professor,"
 i. 17; the "Professor's" estimate
 of Thackeray, 17; Thackeray's
 remark to Dr. Bellows, 18; Thack-
 eray's speech at a *Cornhill* dinner,
 32, 33; Thackeray's jocular pro-
 posal at a Greenwich dinner, 39;
 reputed authorship of the "Ves-
 tiges of Creation," 46; alterations
 by Dickens in author's "copy,"
 79; a French tailor's notion of
 "arriving," 123; Dickens and
 Ary Scheffer, 132; tips to the
 Brighton coachman, 202, 203;
 Robert Stephenson and Paxton's
 plans for the Great Exhibition
 buildings, 208, 209; John Van
 Buren addressing electors in his
 shirt-sleeves, 225; Nathaniel
 Parker Willis and "Willis's
 Rooms," 226; a young-lady
 smuggler in America, 236; Bar-
 num and the beefsteak, 239; the
 gamblers and an American
 Minister, 240, 241; "Bibles"
 and smuggled spirits in the
 Federal army, 243; Mrs. Lincoln
 announcing dinner, 254; the black
 hotel-keeper and the invalid lady,
 257; the American lady and her
 deceased husband's "casket," 259,
 260; the cow-boys and the lecture
 on Junius, 260; the humorist
 counting the steps, 261; Abraham
 Lincoln, and the lady soliciting an
 appointment for a relation, 266;
 well-starched white ducks, ii. 5;
 the Federal lieutenant boarding a
 passenger steamer, 13; the French

- money-lender and his wife, 33, 34; "Mr. Thorough" the money-lender, 42, 43; "Mr. Quasimodo" and Mr. Serjeant Wilkins, 45—47; Dickens and the impecunious man of letters at the Freemasons' Tavern, 57; Captain Jack I—, and Tommy D— in a spunging house, 60, 61; insolvency of a commissioner of insolvency, 62; the sheriff's officer and his daughter in a spunging house, 63; heraldic achievement of a prisoner at Whitecross Street, 68; the professor of theology and the winners of the Derby, 103; Charles Kean and the tom-cat, 121; a criticism on Madame Alboni's voice, 125; Rossini and Sir Henry Bishop's name, 140; laying the ghost of a portrait by Guido Reni, 161, 162; the waiter at the "Cock," and the hard-boiled egg, 187, 188; the waitress and the barrister, 208, 209; a post-prandial speech at the Old Beefsteak club, 215, 216; the Italian image boy and the author, 230, 231
- "Anglo-Parisian Cockneys," i. 109, 110; their place of residence in Paris 110, 111, 118; their delight at Dickens's visits, 112; idleness in Paris, 115; impecuniosity, 113, 117, 119, 127; and Madame Busque, 118; their dinners and breakfasts, 118, 121, 122
- Anglophobia in Paris, i. 173—175
- Antiquary, The*, musical play, ii. 138
- Arabic chorus, An, ii. 141
- Army, The: The abolition of the purchase system and its effect on money-lenders, ii. 37
- Artaxerxes* at St. James's Theatre, ii. 128—131
- Ashbury, Mr. James, ii. 11, 12
- Athens, ii. 9
- Auber, and "*La Parisienne*," ii. 148
- Autographs: Market prices, ii. 267, 268; as evidences of the writers' characters, 268, 270; of Charles Dickens, 271, 272; given away to institutions, 273; Lord Brough-
- am's, 276. (See also Hand-writing).
- Aztec ruins, ii. 10
- Bacon, His allusions to usurers, ii. 35
- Balfe, Michael, ii. 139; marriage of a daughter to Sir John Crampton, 139; his *Siege of Rochelle*, 149
- Balls at American hotels, i. 255
- Bancroft, George, i. 222
- Bankruptcy confined to traders fifty-five years ago, ii. 62
- Barlow, Samuel L. M., Library of, i. 223
- Barnett, John, ii. 137, 139; his *Mountain Sylph*, 149
- Barnett, Morris, ii. 137
- Barnum, Phineas Taylor: author's acquaintance with him, i. 220—222; and the beefsteak, 239, 240
- Barry, Sir Charles, and Paxton's plans for the Great Exhibition Buildings, i. 209
- Bayard, Senator, i. 259; his anecdotes of Western cowboys, etc., 260
- Bayly, Thomas Haynes, and "She wore a wreath of roses," ii. 150
- Bazaine, Marshal, in Mexico, ii. 6, 21, 31
- Beau, A., of 1836, ii. 78, 79
- Beauvais, i. 152
- Beers, Mr. Jan Van, and Goya's "Disasters of War," ii. 165
- Beggars in France, i. 147, 148
- Bellows, Rev. Dr., and Thackeray's visit to America, i. 18, 225
- Belmont, August, of New York, i. 215
- Belt libel case, and the examination of the author, ii. 119
- Bennett, Mr., in *Artaxerxes*, ii. 128
- Bennett, James Gordon, Author's first interview with, i. 210, 211; his hospitality to the author, 219
- Bennett, Sir John, and a dinner at the Old Bailey, ii. 211
- Béranger, his glorification of Napoleonism, i. 189
- Beresford, Inspector, and gambling hells, ii. 95
- Berryer, M., defends Louis Napoleon, i. 185
- Bertolini's Restaurant, ii. 232

- Beverly, William Roxby, his kindness to the author at the Princess's Theatre, i. 5, 6; his picture of a scene in *The Night Dancers*, ii. 170
- Bill-discounters (*see* Money-lenders)
- Bishop, Mrs., in *Rob Roy*, ii. 136
- Bishop, Sir Henry R., ii. 131; and Rossini, 140
- Blackwood, Mr., and the suppers at Ambrose's Tavern, i. 82
- Blanchard, Mr., as "Gilbert Glossin" in *Guy Mannering*, ii. 137; in *The Antiquary*, 138
- Blanchard, Laman, editor of the *Omnibus*, i. 94
- Blanchard, Sidney, i. 77, 94
- Blomfield, Lord, i. 253
- Bohemians, English, in Paris, i. 109, 110, 115, 116—118; forty years ago and now, 113, 114
- Bosquet, General, ii. 31
- Boulogne, A journey in 1839 to, i. 135—139; examination at the Custom House of, 141—144; the luggage porters of, 141; Louis Napoleon's "invasion" of, 183—185
- Braham, John, manager of St. James's Theatre, i. 48; in the *Village Coquette*, 50; in *Artaxerxes*, ii. 128; in *Guy Mannering*, 137
- Breach of promise case, A remarkable defence in a, ii. 46, 47
- Bread, Former price of, ii. 225
- Brigands in Mexico, ii. 6, 7, 22
- Brighton, Camera Obscura at, ii. 10; a pantomime in 1835 at, 106—110; scene in a drawing-room at, 145; exhibition of John Martin's pictures, 168
- Brighton, Railway to, i. 199, 200; coach-ride to, 202; early carriages on the railway to, 205
- British Auxiliary Legion, The, ii. 91, 260
- Brooks, Shirley, i. 85; ii. 233
- Brooks's Club, ii. 174
- Brough, Robert Barnabas, i. 21; one of the "Anglo-Parisian Cockneys," 111; his parody on "The Low-backed Car," 152
- Brough, William, i. 21; one of the Bohemian Cockneys in Paris, 111
- Brougham, Lord, ii. 214; at a meeting in Yorkshire, 274; his dress, 275; his handwriting, 275
- Browning, Robert, at a Cornhill dinner, i. 30
- Brunel and sleeping-cars, i. 238
- Buckingham, Leicester, i. 21
- Bunn, Alfred, his retort on *Punch*, i. 87—89
- Burdett-Coutts, Baroness, ii. 145
- Buren, Mr. John Van, i. 224
- Burgoyne, Field-Marshal Sir John, i. 30
- Busque, Madame, her *cr  merie* in Paris, i. 118, 215
- Butt, Mr. Isaac, ii. 48
- Bryant, Wm. Cullen, i. 225
- Caf  -concerts in Paris, i. 178
- Campbell, Lord, and the Old Beef-Steak Club, ii. 214
- Canada, Dispatch of British troops during American War to, i. 212
- Cantini  re*, A French, in Mexico, ii. 23, 24
- Capias ad satisfaciendum*, The writ of, ii. 52, 53, 54, 57
- Carteret, Sir Philip, and Samuel Pepys, i. 155
- Carlton House, The approach to, ii. 174
- Cato Street Conspiracy, and Arthur Thistlewood, ii. 93, 94
- Cavaignac, General, ii. 31
- Cenci, Beatrice, Apocryphal portrait of, ii. 160—162
- Ceylon, ii. 9
- Chambers, Robert, i. 38
- Chapin, Dr., of New York, i. 220, 221
- Chapultepec, ii. 4
- Chase, Mr., i. 254
- Children, Costumes of, ii. 257—259, 262, 263
- Chiswick Parish Church, ii. 199
- Chop-houses, Luncheons of City merchants at, ii. 200—202
- Christian Commission, The, during the American War, i. 244
- Christmas Days: Difficulty of recalling the way they were spent, ii. 104, 105
- Cider cellars, i. 21

- Clare Market, Money-lenders in the neighbourhood of, ii. 39
Clari, the Maid of Milan, Miss Maria
 Tree in, ii. 137
 Clifford's Inn, A dinner at, ii. 217, 218
 Cloak, The Spanish, worn in England, ii. 259—262
 Clubs: Their development during the reigns of George IV. and William IV., ii. 174; book on the subject published in 1828, 175
 Club, Century (New York), i. 225
 Crockford's, ii. 61, 84, 89, 94
 Deanery, i. 10
 Fielding, i. 20, 22
 Garrick, i. 3
 Old Beefsteak, ii. 175, 213—216
 Reform, i. 34, 35
 Reunion, i. 21
 Coach-travelling from London to Brighton, i. 202
 Cobbett, William, compared with Dickens, i. 103, 107, 109; his knowledge of the French language, 107—109; his denunciation of the potato, ii. 220
 Coffee, its introduction into England, ii. 187
 Coffee-house, Potter's, i. 7, 8; Peele's, ii. 188; New Slaughter's, and Old Slaughter's, 227 (*see also* Taverns)
 Cofre of Perote, The, ii. 9
 Collins, Charles, Association of Dickens with, i. 106
 Collins, Wilkie, Association of Dickens with, i. 106
 Combermere, Lady, ii. 145
 Confederate army, Patriotic lyrics of, i. 248
 Conscripts in France, i. 149
 Consort, The Prince, his blameless example, ii. 94
 Cook, Mr. Douglas, editor of the *Saturday Review*, i. 38
 Cooke, Mr. Grattan, i. 58; ii. 130
 Cooke and Wheatstone's Magnetic Needle Telegraph, i. 199
 Cooking taught in the author's childhood, ii. 219, 221—224
 Cooks of the past: The *chef* at Fricour's, ii. 228, 229; Soyer, 240—249; Charles Edmé Fraucatelli, 249, 250
 "Copper captains," ii. 60, 92
 Collecting-boxes for charitable societies, i. 127, 138
Cornhill Magazine, its commencement, i. 28
Corsican Brothers, The, i. 100
 Costumes of the past: Their great variety, ii. 252; of children, 253—257; of schoolboys in Paris, 258; of schoolboys in England, 259, 264; cloaks of Spanish origin, 259, 262, 263
 Cotton, Sir Vincent, and the Brighton coach, i. 202
 Cotton famine, The, i. 212
 Covent Garden Theatre, *Harlequin and Friar Bacon* at, ii. 113; destroyed by fire, 123
 Coyne, Stirling, i. 21
 Crampton, Mr., and the American Secretary of State, i. 250
 Crampton, Sir John, i. 253; ii. 139
 Crépieux-Jamin, M., on handwriting, ii. 268, 272
 Crimean War, and W. H. Russell's letters to the *Times*, i. 125; and the work of Florence Nightingale, 125
 Crockford's, ii. 61, 84, 89; broken up, 94
 Cruikshank, George: Author's introduction to him, i. 58; his illustrations of "Jack Sheppard," ii. 157
 Cruikshank, Isaac Robert, his portrait of Joseph Grimaldi, ii. 113
 Crystal Palace, and Sir Joseph Paxton's plans, i. 208, 209
 Cumbres, The, ii. 4, 9, 22
 Cunard Line, The, i. 213, 214
 Custom House at Ventimiglia, ii. 156
 Custom House officers at Boulogne, i. 139, 142—144; in America, 234—236
Daily Telegraph, Boxing night, article on the Drury Lane pantomime for, ii. 122; article on the expediency of appointing a public prosecutor, 276
 Dance, Charles, ii. 233
 Debt, Imprisonment for, ii. 53—69
 Debtors' Act of 1869, its effect on

- the money-lending profession, ii. 37
- Delafield, Mr., and Covent Garden Theatre, ii. 124
- Delavigne, Casimir, author of "La Parisienne," i. 150; ii. 148
- Derby, The: A German professor and the winners, ii. 103
- Dibdin, Charles, and *The Lord of the Manor*, ii. 132
- Dicey, Edward, i. 226
- Dickens, Charles: And Thackeray, i. 3; myths regarding him, 46; his greatness, 47; writes the libretto of *The Village Coquettes*, 48, ii. 127; the author's first impressions of him, i. 50, 51; his appearance and dress as a young man, 51; his portrait by Daniel Maclise, 51; the dawn of his popularity, 51—54; early experiences, 52, 53; acquaintance with the author's family, 54; writes *The Strange Gentleman*, 55; dramatised versions of his "Oliver Twist" and "Nicholas Nickleby," 55, 56; his first successes in the United States, 56; opinion of the author's sketches, 62; his appearance in middle life, 60, 74; his editorship of *Household Words*, and his acceptance of contributions from the author, 67—82; his conversational powers compared with those of Thackeray, 75, 76; hatred of shams, 77; his imitators, 77; chairman of *Household Words* dinners, 84, 90; fondness for entertaining police-officers, 95, 96; his trips to Paris, 97; absence of Gallicisms in his writings, 103; good-humoured contempt for foreigners, 104; lack of appreciation for "High Art," 105; fondness for Continental travel, 106; association with Wilkie and Charles Collins, 106; French scholarship, 107; compared with Cobbett, 103, 107, 108; slight acquaintance with French literature, 108, 109; visits to Paris between 1851 and 1855 and fraternising with the "Anglo-Parisian cockneys," 112, 113; breakfast in Paris with the author, 123—126; "getting up" Macaulay's "history," 124, 125; liking for old-fashioned hotels, 126, 127; and Victor Hugo, 128; partiality for the Palais Royal restaurants, 130; love for the theatre, 131, 132; portrait by Ary Scheffer, 132; on the men of the United States, 265; his practical knowledge of legal processes illustrated in "Pickwick," ii. 56; at a dinner at the Freemasons' Tavern, 57; the assimilative power of his genius, 76; his pictures of fast life and his ideal flunkey, 75, 76; and the "Life of Joseph Grimaldi," 113; his autograph, 271, 272
- Dickens, Junior, Charles, dinner given on his departure for China, ii. 56
- Diet of schoolboys in Paris, ii. 191—194
- Diligence*, Travelling in France by, i. 145—154
- Dinners: Of schoolboys in Paris, ii. 193; in a Pestalozzian academy, 195—198; at City chop-houses, 200—202; at an eating-house on Holborn Hill, 202; at alamoche beef shops, 202—204; at the "Thirteen Cantons," 203, 204; at Williams's Boiled Beef House, 205—209; in the dining-room of the Old Bailey Court, 210—213; at Clifford's Inn, 217, 218; at the old Beefsteak Club, 213—216; at the mess-room, St. James's Palace, in the Bank of England, and at the Tower, 218
- "Dixie," and other lyrics of the Confederate army, i. 248
- Dormer, Nicholas, and the Holy Well at the "Old Dog" Tavern, ii. 179, 180
- D'Orsay, Count Alfred, ii. 78
- Doyle, Richard, at "Soyer's Symposium," i. 13; 44, 59
- Draughtsmen, Railway, their earnings during the railway mania, i. 204, 205
- Drinking habits in former times, ii. 182, 185, 186, 202

- Drunkenness, Punishment in the Federal army for, i. 242; its decrease in London, ii. 71, 73
- Drury Lane Theatre, *Za-Ze-Zi-Zo-Zoo* at, ii. 114, 115
- Dufferin, Lord, i. 253; ii. 145
- Dumas the younger, Alexandre, i. 129, 188
- Duruset, Mr., in *The Antiquary*, ii. 138
- Duval, Claude, and Great Swallow Street, ii. 174
- École de Natation, Paris, i. 179
- Edwards, Mr. Henry Sutherland: One of the "Anglo-Parisian Cockneys," i. 111; contributes to the *Figaro*, 111; business transactions in Paris, 116
- Egan, Pierce, his description of "fast" life in London, ii. 72
- Egerton, Mr. and Mrs., in *Rob Roy*, ii. 136
- Ellerton, Mr. John Lodge, composer of the "Evening Gun," ii. 144
- Elliot, Sir Henry, i. 253
- Ellis, Mr. George, i. 100; ii. 120
- Emery, Sam, i. 21; in *Guy Mannering*, ii. 137; in *The Antiquary*, 138
- Epicure, A vision appearing to an, ii. 251
- Essex, Countess of, and her nieces, ii. 129
- Evans, General Sir de Lacy, and the British Legion, ii. 91, 260
- Evans's Supper Rooms, i. 86
- Evarts, Mr. William Maxwell, Anecdote told by, i. 259, 260
- Evening dress, Influence on manners of, ii. 73
- Fashions in the early part of the Queen's reign, i. 61; at the present time, 135
- Fast life of the past: different from that of the present, ii. 70, 71, 73; reaction during the Restoration, 71: the Whipping Toms and Mocks, 71; as depicted by Pierce Egan, 72; in "Nicholas Nickleby," 74—76; in St. Giles's, 80; practical jokes of the "Mad Marquis" and the Hon. Billy D—, 80—86; gambling, 86—96; night-houses, and the condition of the Haymarket, 96—102
- Faucit, Mrs., in *The Antiquary*, ii. 138
- Federal army during American War: Mode of punishment for drunkenness, i. 242; teetotalism and smuggled drinks, 243; care bestowed by the Sanitary Commission and the Christian Commission, 244; absence of corporal punishment, 245; "spread-eagling," 245; influence of Puritanism, 247; verses adapted to the tune of "John Brown," 247, 248
- Field, Inspector, i. 95, 96
- Fielding Club, Author's meeting with Thackeray at the, i. 22, 23
- Fielding's burlesque of *Tom Thumb the Great*, ii. 133
- Fieri facias*, The writ of, ii. 52, 53
- "Filthy bluebellies," i. 237, 246
- Fitzwilliam, Mr., in *The Heart of Midlothian*, ii. 138
- Fleet Prison, The, ii. 55, 56, 58, 65
- Forey, General, ii. 31
- Forster, John, i. 29; allusion to his "Life" of Dickens, 49
- Francatelli, Charles Edmé, ii. 249
- France: Gendarmes, i. 140, 141; passports, 142; Custom House, 141, 142; travelling by *diligence*, 145—154; beggars, 147; poplar-bordered roads, 148; villages, 148; conscripts, 149; and Mexico, ii. 30, 31; usurers amongst the peasants, 39
- Francis, John Deffett, i. 21
- Freemasons' Tavern, Dinner in honour of Charles Dickens, jr., at, ii. 56
- French usurer, Anecdote of a, ii. 33, 34
- Frétilton, Madame, ii. 79; and the "Mad Marquis," 85
- Frias, Duke of, ii. 139
- Fricour's Restaurant, ii. 227, 228
- Gallenga, Antonio, i. 268
- Gambling: On American Steamers, i. 240, 241; at Madame Une Telle's establishment, ii. 87—89; at Crock-

- ford's 89; at houses in the neighbourhood of Leicester Square, 90; the "Greeks," 90—92; Jack Thurtell and his victim, 92, 93; and Arthur Thistlewood, 93, 94; breaking-up of the "hells," 95
- Garrick Club, The, i. 3
- Garrick's Head Hotel, ii. 123
- Gaskell, Mrs., a contributor to *Household Words*, i. 85
- Gendarmes, i. 140, 141
- Geometry in the training of an artist, i. 148
- George IV., Libel by William Hone on, ii. 173
- George Barnwell*, played at Brighton, ii. 107
- Gilchrist, Dr., ii. 150
- Giovanni in London*, at the Lyceum Theatre, ii. 136
- Goldsmith, Oliver, and the "Old Dog" Tavern, ii. 180
- Gore House, taken by Alexis Soyer, i. 12
- Goya y Lucientes, Don Francisco, Etchings by, ii. 164—166
- Graham, junior, James Lorimer, i. 222
- Grant, General, his taciturnity, ii. 11; his knowledge of Mexico, 11
- Great Exhibition, of 1851, and the transformation of Gore House, i. 12; Sir Joseph Paxton's design for, 207, 208
- Great Swallow Street, demolished for the construction of Regent Street, ii. 173
- "Greeks," *Gamesters*, ii. 90—92
- Greeley, Horace, amongst the London Bohemians in Paris, i. 118, 215; renewal of author's acquaintance with, 220
- "Greenbacks," Issue of, i. 229
- "Greybacks," i. 237
- Grimaldi, Joseph, ii. 113
- Grisi, Madame, ii. 225; a benefit of hers at Her Majesty's Theatre, 263
- Gruneisen, Mr., ii. 262
- Guizot, M., applies to the British Government for the restoration of the ashes of Napoleon I. to France, i. 190
- Guy Mannering*, Miss Geneviève Ward in, ii. 137
- Gye, Frederick, Handwriting of, ii. 278, 279
- Hackney coaches of 1839, i. 133, 134
- Hall, Mr. Sydney, ii. 262
- Hallselle, Keely, i. 72
- Handwriting: As an index of character, ii. 268, 270; smallness of the author's, 269, 270; Charles Dickens's, 271, 272; Lord Brougham's, 275, 276; Beresford Hope's, 276; Walter Thornbury's, 276; Thackeray's, 277; Douglas Jerrold's, 277; Sir Arthur Helps', 278; Charles Reade's, 278; Frederick Gye's and Charles Godfrey Leland's, 279
- Hannay, James, i. 22
- Harlequin Billy Taylor*, i. 100; played at the Princess's Theatre, ii. 120, 121
- Harlequin and Friar Bacon* at Covent Garden Theatre, ii. 113
- Harlequin Hogarth*, ii. 120
- Harlequin King Henry VIII.*, at Covent Garden Theatre, ii. 121, 122
- Harley, John Pritt, i. 50, 54; in *The Lord of the Manor*, ii. 133, 134
- Harper, the trumpet-player, ii. 130
- Harris, Mr. Augustus, stage director at Covent Garden Theatre in 1856, ii. 121
- Harris, Sir Augustus, ii. 121
- Harrisse, Mr. Henry, i. 223
- Hart, Mr. Ernest, i. 21
- Havana, ii. 4; Opera House and cigar manufactory at, 15
- Hawkers in Paris, i. 157, 158, 161, 162
- Haymarket, The, Its condition during the days of the night-houses and now, ii. 96—98
- Heart of Midlothian*, at the Surrey Theatre, ii. 138
- Helps, Sir Arthur, Handwriting of, ii. 278
- Hemans, Mrs., Melancholy tone of her songs, ii. 153, 154
- Higgins, Matthew, i. 31

- Highwaymen, Haunts in Great Swallow Street of, ii. 173
- Hogarth, Thackeray's opinion of, i. 24; author's proposed "Life" of, 25, 27; the author's papers in the *Cornhill Magazine* on, 28, 29; lodging at the "Old Elephant," ii. 177; his residence in Leicester Square, 232
- Hogg, James, and the suppers at Ambrose's tavern, i. 83
- Hollingshead, Mr. John, i. 21, 77
- Holloway Prison, compared with Whitecross Street Prison, ii. 68
- Holy Well, The, and the "Old Dog" Tavern, ii. 179, 180
- Hone, William, His *Political Catechism*, and his oblique compliment to George IV., ii. 173
- Hook, Theodore, and Crockford's, ii. 94
- Hope, Mr. Beresford, i. 38; his handwriting, ii. 276
- Horne, Richard Henry, at the *Household Words* dinners, i. 92; his "Orion" and other literary work, 93
- Hotels, Old-fashioned and modern, i. 126, 127; at Washington, 255, 256; of Havana, ii. 14
- Houghton, Lord, i. 30
- Household Words*, Author's contributions to, i. 19, 20, 67-74, 77-82; anonymity of its contributors, 80, 81; dinners to contributors to, 84, 85, 90-95
- Howe, Mrs. Julia Ward, Her words for the tune of "John Brown," i. 247, 248
- Hugo, Victor, and Charles Dickens, i. 128
- Hullah, John, and the *Village Coquettes*, i. 48, 49
- Hungerford Market, Historical associations of, ii. 234; its architecture and general arrangements, 235; disused as a market, 235; its attractions, 236
- Hunt, Leigh, at the *Household Words* dinners, i. 90, 91; characteristics, 91; as a journalist, 92
- Hurlburt, Mr. William Henry, i. 220
- Imprisonment for debt under the writ of *Capias ad satisfaciendum*, ii. 53; illustrated in "Pickwick," 54, 55
- Insolvency of gentlemen in difficulties, ii. 62
- Irving, Mr. Henry, ii. 1
- Isclascihuatl, ii. 10
- Iturbide, ii. 28; his two sons, 28, 29
- Ivanoff, M., ii. 225
- Jerrold, Blanchard, i. 77; his "Life of Napoleon, III.," and other literary work, 94; residence in Paris, and association with London Bohemians, 110; industry in Paris, 116
- Jerrold, Douglas, i. 44; at Kilpack's Divan, 86; caricatured by the author, 87, 88; his advice to the author, 90; allusion to his "Prisoner of War," 104; his handwriting, ii. 277
- "John Brown," Mrs. J. W. Howe's words for the tune of, i. 247, 248
- "John Doe and Richard Roe," ii. 52, 53
- Johnson, Andrew, Incident at inauguration of, i. 263
- Johnson, Captain Cecil, i. 252
- Johnson, Mr. Godschild, i. 252
- "Journey Due North," A, i. 102
- Joyce, Q.C., Samuel, and Clifford's Inn, ii. 217
- Juarez, President, ii. 6, 30, 31
- Kean, Charles, takes the management of the Princess's Theatre, ii. 120; a humorous remark to his wife, 121
- Keeley, Mrs., as "Oliver Twist," and as "Smike," i. 56; as "Jack Sheppard," 262
- King's Bench Prison, Chancery prisoners in, ii. 65
- Kingsley, Charles, i. 29
- Knight, Charles, at the *Household Words* dinners, i. 90
- Knight, Rev. Joseph Philip, and "She wore a wreath of roses," ii. 150
- "La Marseillaise," i. 150

- "La Parisienne," Casimir Delavigne's, i. 150
 Lablache, M., ii. 225
 Laffarge, Madame, her trial, i. 181
 Lamb, Charles, his remark respecting John Braham, i. 48
 Lamoricière, General, ii. 31
 Landseer, Sir Edwin, i. 31
 Lara, Don Miguel de Mañara Vicentelo de, ii. 163
 Layard, Sir A. H., i. 253
 Le Flô, General, ii. 31, 32
 Leal, Valdes, his "Dead Prelate," ii. 163, 164
 Lebœuf, General, ii. 31
 Leclercq, Miss Carlotta, as Columbine at the Princess's Theatre, ii. 120
 Leech, John, i. 44, 59
 Leighton, Sir Frederick, i. 30
 Leighton, Mr. John, i. 14
 Leland, Charles Godfrey, his handwriting, ii. 279
 Lemon, Mark, i. 44, 59; his geniality, 62; opinion of the author's sketches, 63; caricatured by the author, 88
Les Pilules du Diable, at Franconi's Winter Circus, ii. 115—118
 Lever, Charles, His allusions to money-lenders, ii. 38
 Levy, Mr. Jonas, i. 21
 Lewes, George H., i. 30
 Limmer's Hotel, ii. 171
 Lincoln, Abraham: Simplicity of his prandial arrangements, i. 254; proclamation of the abolition of slavery, 259; appearance and manner, 264; his dry humour, 265, 266
 Linley, George, *Melodies* by, ii. 150, 151
 Liston, in *Rob Roy*, ii. 136; in *Guy Mannering*, 137; in *The Anti-quary*, 138
 Literary men, Money-lenders to, ii. 40
 Lockhart, John Gibson, and "Noctes Ambrosianæ," i. 82, 83
 Locock, Sir Charles, and the Old Beefsteak Club, ii. 214
 Loftus, Lord Augustus, i. 253
 London and Brighton Railway, Commencement and opening of, i. 199, 200; early carriages on the, 205—207
 Long's Hotel, ii. 171
 Lopes de Santa Anna, Don Antonio, His characteristics, and his attempt to enter Vera Cruz, ii. 19—21
Lord of the Manor, The, "Moll Flaggon" in, ii. 132, 133
 Louis, King of Holland, i. 183
 Louis Napoleon, His "invasion" of Boulogne, i. 183—185; his subsequent career, 185, 186; his parentage, 183, 187
 Louis Philippe, Policy of, i. 189, 191
Love in a Village, *Airs* in, ii. 135
 Lover, Samuel, Versatility of, ii. 151
 Lyceum Theatre, *The, Giovanni in London* at, ii. 136; and the Old Beefsteak Club, 213
 Lyons, Lord, i. 214; his tact and skill at Washington during the American War, 249, 250; his taciturnity and his numerous despatches, 250—252; his good dinners, 252, 253
 Macdonald, Marshal, Funeral of, i. 182
 Mackay, Charles, i. 34, 268
 Macready, William Charles, i. 110
 "Mad Marquis," *The*, ii. 80, 82, 84; at Marlborough Street Police Court, 85, 86
 Maddox, Mr. John Medex, His employment of the author at the Princess's Theatre, i. 6, 203; ii. 118
 Madeleine, *The*, i. 159
 Maginn, Dr. William, and the suppers at Ambrose's Tavern, i. 82, 83
 Magnetic Needle Telegraph, i. 199
 Malet, Sir Edward, i. 251
 Malibran, ii. 145, 225
Man in the Moon, The, i. 64; ii. 233
 Marble, Mr. Manton, Editor of the *New York World*, i. 220
Maria di Rohan at Covent Garden Theatre, ii. 123—127
 Markets, The fascinations of, ii. 236
Marriage of Figaro, ii. 131

- Marriott, Frederick, ii. 181
 Marshalsea Prison: Class of debtors confined there, ii. 63
 Martin, John, Pictures by, ii. 166—168
 Maximilian, Emperor, ii. 6
 Maxwell, Mr. John, and *Temple Bar*, i. 33, 34
 Mayhew, Augustus, i. 111
 Mayhew, Henry, and his "London Labour and Loudon Poor," i. 111
 Mayhew, Horace, i. 44
 Mayhew, Julius, i. 111
 Mexico: Souvenirs of a visit, ii. 1—4, 9; costume for horseback riding, 3; author's travelling outfit, 4, 6; brigands, 6, 7, 22; reminiscences awakened, 9, 10; and General Grant, 11; and the dangers of a voyage there during the American War, 12, 14; the palace at the capital, 25, 26; cathedral, sacrificial stone, and market of the capital, 27; hotels, 28; abstemiousness amongst the upper classes of the city, 29; the national beverage, 29; condition prior to the arrival of Maximilian, 30
Midas, Song for Apollo in, ii. 135
 Millais, Sir John, i. 30
 Mohocks, The, of Queen Anne's reign, ii. 71
 Money-lenders: Their hardness and rapacity illustrated, ii. 33, 34; exaggerated ideas of their gains, 34, 35; Bacon's remark on their vocation, 35; their numbers diminished, 36; risks of "kite-flying," 36; affected by the legislation of 1869, 37; affected by abolition of purchase in the army, 37; old customs of lenders and borrowers, 38; at the West End, about Clare Market, and amongst French peasants, 39, 40; to literary men, 40; a "didactic" specimen, 41; the tactics of "Mr. Thorough," 42, 43; making presents of food to clients, 44; description of "Mr. Quasimodo," and his breach of promise case, 44—47; "My Tommy's" hospitality and business practices, 47—50
 Montholon, Marquis de, ii. 32
 Morelos, *The Cura*, ii. 25
 Morland, "Dicky," i. 11
Mother Goose, and Joey Grimaldi, ii. 113
Mountain Sylph, John Barnett's, ii. 149
 Muloch, Miss Dinah, a contributor to *Household Words*, i. 85
 Murillo, and Valdes Leal's "Dead Prelate," ii. 163
 Murphy, Mr. Commissioner, ii. 48
 Music impressed upon the mind in infancy, ii. 143
 Musical critics in 1836, Manners of, ii. 129
 "My Tommy," His career as a bill-discounter, ii. 47—50
 Napoleon I.: Parisian enthusiasm for him in 1840, i. 187—189; interment of his remains in Paris in 1840, 192—195
 Napoleon III. in Algeria, ii. 141
 Nash, the architect, His construction of Regent Street, ii. 87, 173
 Nassau, rendezvous for Confederate agents during the American War, i. 235
 New York: Voyage from England thirty years ago, i. 213; lavish expenditure on entertainments during the war, 227—230
 Nicholas, Emperor, and the parody, "The Low-bred Czar," ii. 152
 "Nickleby," Banquets given by, ii. 48; illustrations of fast life in, 74, 75
 "Night-houses," ii. 96
 Nightingale, Florence: Dickens's appreciation of her work, i. 125
 "Noctes Ambrosianæ," Origin of, i. 82, 83
Norte, Description of a, ii. 16
 North, Christopher, and the suppers at Ambrose's Tavern, i. 82, 83
 Norton, The Hon. Caroline, ii. 145
 O'Connell, Morgan John, i. 21
 O'Dowd, Mr. J. H., i. 220
 Old Bailey Court, A dinner at the, ii. 211—213
 Old Beefsteak Club, ii. 175; a dinner at the, 213—216

- "Old Dog" Tavern, The: Its antiquity, ii. 178, 179; Pepys' allusion, 178; allusion by Timbs, 179; and the Holy Well, 179; excavation of the supposed well, 179, 180; its appearance, 183; its accommodation, 184, 185
- Omelettes, Inability of British people to make, ii. 227
- Operas of past years: *Maria di Rohan*, ii. 123—127; *Village Coquettes*, 127; *Artaxerxes*, 128—130; *Marriage of Figaro*, 131; *The Lord of the Manor*, 132; *The Quakers*, 134; *Love in a Village*, 135; *Midas*, 135; *Giovanni in London*, 136; *Rob Roy*, 136; *Guy Mannering*, 137; *The Antiquary*, 138; *The Heart of Midlothian*, 138; the *Domino Noir*, 148; the *Pré aux Clercs*, 148; the *Ambassadeur*, 148; the *Postillon de Longjumeau*, 148; *Siege of Rochelle*, 149; *The Mountain Sylph*, 149
- Orizaba, Peak of, ii. 9
- Orleans, Duchess of, i. 172
- Osborne, Lord Sidney Godolphin, i. 29
- Paganini, ii. 145
- Pagliano's Hotel, ii. 231
- Palmerston, Lord, and M. Guizot's application for the restoration of the ashes of Napoleon I. to France, i. 190; 214
- Pantomimes: The author's first experiences of them, ii. 106—111; tricks in former days, 109—111; remarks of a critic of 1835, 111, 112; their degeneracy complained of, 113; at Covent Garden, 113, 121; at Drury Lane, 114; in Paris, 115—118; at the Princess's Theatre, 118
- Pauton Street, Night-houses of, ii. 98—102
- Paris: Dickens's frequent trips, i. 97; English Bohemians, 109, 110—123; Dickens's domicile, 124; restaurants, 130; theatres, 131, 132; journey from Boulogne by diligence, 145—164; its condition in 1667, 155, 156; its streets in 1839, 156—163; street cries, 157, 158; hawkers, 157, 158, 161, 162; the Madeleine, 159; the Rue Royale, 159, 160; Place de la Concorde, 160; the Champs Élysées, 160, 161; Parc Monceau, 163; a peaceful Major-General, 165; schoolboy life, 166, 174, 177—180; a distribution of school prizes, 166, 167; memories of the Reign of Terror, 169, 170; wearing of whiskers and moustaches, 170, 171; the Duchess of Orleans, 172; the Prince Imperial, 173; Anglophobia, 173—175; Ecole de Natation, 179, 180; trial of Madame Laffarge, 181; funeral of Marshal Macdonald, 182; trial of Louis Napoleon, 185; enthusiasm about Napoleon I. 187, 188, 189; policy of Louis Philippe, 189—191; second funeral of Napoleon I., 192—195; pantomimes, ii. 115—118
- Parody, by Robert Brough, on "The Low-backed Car," ii. 152
- Parry, Junior, Mr. John, His engagement at St. James's Theatre, i. 47, 48, 50
- Passports, Examination at Boulogne of, i. 142
- Paxton, Sir Joseph, and his plans for the Great Exhibition, i. 208, 209
- Payn, Mr. James, i. 77; contributor to *Household Words*, 94
- Pélissier, General, ii. 31
- Pepys, Samuel, and the condition of Paris in 1667, i. 155
- Persiani, ii. 225
- Pestalozzian academy, Diet of boys in a, ii. 194—198
- "Piccadilly Saloon," The, ii. 97, 98
- Pictures of the past: Impressions made by them, ii. 155, 156; "Jack Sheppard," 156—159; masterpieces, 160; a portrait by Guido Reni, 160—162; by Spanish masters, 162—165; the "Dead Prelate," 163, 164; "Los Desastres de la Guerra," 164—165; Goya's picture on the "Inquisition," 166; Martin's "Eve of the Deluge," "Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still," "Bel-

- shazzar's Feast," and the "Fall of Babylon," 167; Turner's "Rain, Steam, and Speed," "Jessica at the Window," the "Slave Ship," the "Old *Téméraire*," and "Venice—going to the Ball," and "Returning from the Ball," 169; Clarkson Stanfield's seashore scene in *Zeis and Galatea*, and William Beverly's scene in *The Night Dancers*, 169, 170
- "Pickwick," Allusion to the operation of the writ of *Capias ad satisfaciendum* in, ii. 54, 55; the Chancery prisoner in, 65
- Pitt, Wm., and the forged *assignats*, i. 229
- Policemen, of 1839, i. 136; and the night-houses, ii. 101, 102
- Pond, Christopher, ii. 204
- Popocataypetl, ii. 10, 11
- Potato, The, the curse of the English *cuisine*, ii. 220; its popularity and its denunciation by Cobbett, 220
- Potter's Coffee House, Its library, i. 7; its proprietor, 8
- Prince Imperial, The, i. 173
- Princess's Theatre, The: i. 5; a pantomime in 1846, ii. 118, 119; *Harlequin Billy Taylor* at, 120, 121; under Charles Kean's management, 120, 121
- Prior, Mr. Melton, ii. 262
- Procter, Miss Adelaide, a contributor to *Household Words*, i. 85
- Pullman's carriage building works, i. 238
- Pulque*, ii. 29
- Punch, and Mark Lemon, i. 59, 62, 63; parody of frontispiece by the author, 88, 89
- "Punch and Judy," ii. 109
- Puritanism, Influence on American Federal army of, i. 247; reaction against it during the Restoration, ii. 71
- Quaker, The*, *Airs* in, ii. 134, 135
- "Quasimodo," Mr., money-lender, His appearance and his breach of promise case, ii. 44—47
- Queen's Messengers between America and England, i. 252
- Railway, London and Brighton, Commencement and opening of, i. 199, 200; early carriages on the, 205—207
- Railway mania of 1845, and the labours of draughtsmen, i. 204, 205
- Railways: Signalmen of 1839, i. 197, 198; electric telegraph on, 199; Parliamentary trains on, 206; early carriages on, 205—207; the smoking-carriage innovation on, 207; in America, 230—234
- Rainforth, Miss, in *Artozerxes*, ii. 128
- Ranelagh, Lord, and the Spanish cloak, ii. 262
- Raymond, Henry, Editor of *New York Times*, i. 220
- Reach, Angus B., i. 20; and the *Man in the Moon*, 64
- Reade, Charles, Handwriting of, ii. 278
- Reform Club, i. 34, 35
- Regent Street, as originally built by Nash, ii. 87; buildings demolished for the construction of, 173
- Reign of Terror, Memories of the, i. 169, 170
- Reni, Guido, A portrait by, ii. 160—162
- Reunion Club, i. 21
- Riggs and Coreoran, Banking firm of, i. 256
- Rob Roy*, at Covent Garden Theatre, ii. 136
- Romance of a waistcoat, ii. 264, 265
- Romer, Miss, *prima donna*, ii. 128
- Rossini, and Sir Henry Bishop's name, ii. 140
- Rowdysm fifty years ago, ii. 73
- Rubini, M., ii. 225
- Russell, Admiral, i. 86
- Russell, William Howard, i. 38; his letters to the *Times* from the Crimea, 125; in America, 268
- Russian song to the music of the *batalaika*, ii. 141, 142
- Sacrificios, ii. 16
- St. Albans, Duchess of, ii. 145
- St. Clair, Mr., in *Guy Mannerling*, ii. 137

- St. Denis, i. 153
 St. James's Theatre, Engagements of author's mother and Mr. John Parry at, i. 47, 48
 St. Thomas, ii. 19, 21
 Sanitary Commission during American War, i. 244
 Santsbury, Mr. George, ii. 134
 Sargent, Mr. G. F., ii. 262
Saturday Review, Its treatment of the author, i. 38
 Scheffer, Ary, His portrait of Charles Dickens, i. 132
 Schoolboy life in Paris, i. 166, 174, 177—180; ii. 191—194
 Seacole, Mrs., ii. 24
 "Seecesh" officers, i. 236
 Semaphore on the roof of the Admiralty, i. 201
 Serjeants' Inn, and processes against debtors, ii. 56
 Seville, Pictures in the Church of La Caridad at, ii. 163
 Seward, Mr., Nephew of W. H. Seward, i. 267
 Seward, William H., i. 215, 254; characteristics, 266, 267; his opinion of the English Press, 267, 268
 Seymour, Captain Conway, i. 252
 Sheffield, Mr., Secretary to Lord Lyons at Washington, i. 251
 Sheppard, Jack, Portrait in Washington of, i. 261, 262; ii. 158, 159; and a face on the Riviera, 156, 157
 Sherreff, Miss, *Prima donna*, ii. 128
Siege of Rochelle, Balfe's, ii. 149
 Signalling, Railway, First system of, i. 197, 198
 Sikes, Mr., Designer of the cover of *Cornhill Magazine*, i. 28, 31
 Simpson, Mr. William, ii. 262
 Slavery, Its abolition in British Colonies, i. 137, 217
 Sleeping-cars, in America, i. 230, 231, 238; their originators, 238, 239
 Smith, Albert: Takes the author to the Fielding Club, i. 20; and the *Cornhill Magazine*, 29; and the *Man in the Moon*, 64; ii. 233; his "Great Hotel Nuisance," i. 126
 Smith, Mr. George, i. 25, 27; his payments for contributions to the *Cornhill Magazine*, 29
 Smith, John Thomas, Author of "A Book for a Rainy Day," ii., 234
 Smith, Miss Julia, in *Artaxerxes*, ii. 128, 129
 Smuggling in America during the war, i. 236
 Songs of the Past: The "Yemstchick Song," ii. 142; "The Evening Gun," 144; "The Bay of Dublin," 145; "Entreat me not to leave thee," 145; "Lascia ch'io piango," 145; "So Miss Myrtle is going to Marry," 145; "*Les Compliments de Normandie*," 146; "*L'Ange Déchu*," 147, 148; "*La Parisienne*," 147; the "Magic-wove Scarf," 150; "She wore a wreath of roses," 150; "Constance," "The Spirit of Love," and "Kathleen Mavourneen," 151; "Rory O'More," 151; "The Four-leaved Shamrock," 152; "The Low-backed Car," 152; "Through the Wood," "I'd be a butterfly," "Oh, give me back my Arab steed," "Burial in the Desert," and the "Pilgrim Fathers," 153
 Soyer, Alexis, turns Gore House into a restaurant, i. 12; and Thackeray, 15; his journey to Scutari and Balaclava, 101; ii. 248; his offer to the author, i. 102; and alamode beef, ii. 203; his dress, and an introduction to him in Hungerford Market, 240—242; leaves the Reform Club, 242; his books on cookery, 242, 243; his apartments in Soho, 243, 244; his wife, and her monument in Kensal Green Cemetery, 244, 245; his miniature kitchen and larder, 246; his character, 247; lectures at United Service Institution, 248
 "Soyer's Symposium," i. 12; Thackeray's visit to, 13—17
 Spain, The British Legion in, ii. 91, 260
 Spaniards, Pseudo-, in London, ii. 261
 Spanish peasant song, ii. 142
 "Spread-Eagling" in the Federal army, i. 245

- "Spunging houses:" Described by Dickens and Thackeray, ii. 58; in *Cursitor Street* and *Bream's Buildings*, 58; habits of inmates, 59; and the pathetic scenes witnessed, 60; and "copper captains," 60; their private apartments, 61; off the *Blackfriars Road*, 63
- Spurs of Mexico, ii. 3, 4
- Stanfield, Clarkson, i. 110; his picture of a scene in *Acis and Galatea* ii. 170
- Staunton, Mr., i. 254
- Steamboat travelling in America, i. 239—241
- Stephen, Mr. Leslie, and Thackeray, i. 2
- Stephens, Miss, in *Rob Roy*, ii. 136; in *Guy Mannering*, 137; in the *Antiquary*, 138
- Stephenson, Robert, and Sir Joseph Paxton's plans for the Great Exhibition building, i. 208, 209
- Sterry, Mr. Ashby, and the versatility of Samuel Lover, ii. 151
- Stranger, The*, ii. 108
- Street-cries in Paris, i. 157, 158
- Sullivan, Barry, i. 93
- Sumner, Charles, at a dinner at Thackeray's, i. 36, 37; his manner, and his eloquence as a senator, 258, 259
- Swan Tavern, Hungerford Market, Eccentric people at the, ii. 237—239
- Swearing, Habit of, in London, i. 135, 136; in France, 139
- Taglioni, Maria, ii. 225, 226
- Tamburini, M., ii. 225
- Taverns of the past: Their transformations of to-day, ii. 172; the "Monster," "Elephant and Castle," "Swiss Cottage," "Eyre Arms," "Sol's Arms," "Angel," "Mother Redcap," 172; work of demolition by Nash, 173; causes of demolition, 174; "Old White Hart," 175, 176; "Thatched House," "Angel" (Strand), "Crown and Anchor," "London Tavern," "Clarendon" (Bond Street), "Old Elephant," 176, 177; "Old Dog," 178, 180, 183, 184—187; "Old Betty's Chop House," 179; the old "Hum-mums," "Rainbow," and the "Cock," 187; "Peele's Coffee House," 188; "Blue Posts," 188; "Swan," Hungerford Market, 236
- Tawell, the murderer, and the electric telegraph, i. 199
- Taylor, Bayard, i. 222
- Taylor, Sir Charles, i. 30; at a *Corn-hill* dinner, 33
- Tea, Former prices of, ii. 224
- Teetotalism in the Federal army of America, i. 243
- Telegraph, Electric, on the Great Western Railway, i. 199
- Telegraph, Magnetic Needle, i. 199
- Telegraph, Wheatstone's Alphabetical, i. 199
- Temple Bar*, Its commencement, i. 34
- Tenniel, Sir John, i. 44
- Tenostitlan, ii. 10
- Terry, Kate, Miss, in a pantomime at the Princess's Theatre, ii. 120
- Thackeray, William Makepeace: As drawn by Anthony Trollope, i. 2; and Charles Dickens, 3; the most competent person to write his life, 3; and Mr. Edmund Yates 3—5; his pseudonyms in *Fraser's Magazine*, 9; at the Deanery Club, 11; at "Soyer's Symposium," 13—17; his remark to the "Professor" at Gore House, 17; his lecturing tour in the United States, 18; and Dr. Bellows, 18; meeting with the author at the Fielding Club, 22, 23; his opinion of Hogarth, 24; as a conversationalist, 25, 75; his varying moods, 26; commences *Cornhill Magazine*, 28; as a lecturer, 31, 32; as an after-dinner speaker, 32, 33; proposes the author as a member of the Reform Club, 34, 35; removal to Kensington, 36; sees Napoleon at St. Helena, 38; his jocular suggestion at a dinner at Greenwich, 39; his death, 39; characteristics, 40—44; his extraction, 43; his associates on the *Punch* staff, 41; partiality for

- patrician acquaintances, 44; myths regarding his individuality, 46; his use of foreign words and expressions, 103; his description of the second funeral of Napoleon, 193; his ideal flunkie, ii. 76
- Thistlewood, Arthur, ruined by gambling, ii. 93, 94
- Thomas, Mr. W. Moy, i. 77, 94
- Thornbury, Walter, i. 77, 94; his handwriting, ii. 276, 277
- Thornhill, Sir James, and the portrait of Jack Sheppard, i. 262; ii. 157
- Thornton, Sir Edward, i. 253
- "Thorough, Mr.," money-lender, ii. 42—44
- Thurtell, Jack, and his victim, Weare, ii. 92, 93
- Tickler, Mr., and the suppers at Ambrose's Tavern, i. 82
- Tierra Caliente, Vegetation of, ii. 9, 10
- Timbs, John, allusion to the "Old Dog" Tavern, and the Holy Well, ii. 179
- Tom Thumb the Great* at the St. James's Theatre, ii. 133, 134
- Tomlins, Frederick Guest, i. 21
- "Trapbois," The, ii. 38
- Tree, Miss Maria in *Clari, the Maid of Milan*, ii. 137
- Trent affair, The, i. 212
- Trollope, Anthony, His portraiture of Thackeray, i. 2; some of his characteristics, 30
- Turner's pictures, ii. 168, 169
- Turnham Green, Diet of boys in an academy at, ii. 194—198
- Une Telle, Madame, Gambling Inferno kept by, ii. 87—89
- Vanderbilt, Commodore, i. 223
- Ventimiglia, Custom House at, ii. 156
- Vera Cruz, ii. 4, 15; a *Norte* off, 16; its people, streets, and unsanitary condition, 17; French and Egyptian troops at, 16, 18
- Vernet, Horace, His illustrations of the "Life" of Napoleon I., by M. Laurent de l'Ardèche, i. 189
- Verrey's Restaurant, ii. 229, 230
- Vestris, Madame, in *Marriage of Figaro*, ii. 131; as Don Giovanni, 136
- Victoria, Queen, Her influence on the morals of the West-End, ii. 94
- Village Coquettes*, ii. 127
- Villages in France, i. 148
- Villiers, Mr. Frederick, ii. 262
- Vivian, Lord, i. 253
- Waistcoat, A romance of a, ii. 264, 265
- Walford, Mr., Allusion to the "Old Dog" Tavern, and the Holy Well, ii. 179
- Walker, Frederick, i. 31
- Ward, Miss Geneviève, at Havana, ii. 15; in *Guy Mannering*, 137
- Warner, Mrs., in *Rob Roy*, ii. 137
- Warren, Samuel, allusion to his "Ten Thousand a Year," ii. 38
- Washington: Festal aspect during the war, i. 230; ability and hospitality of Lord Lyons as British Minister, 249—253; hospitality at the White House, 253, 254; hotels, 255, 256; eloquent speech by Mr. Sumner, 259; the Capitol, 263
- West, Mrs. W., in *Rob Roy*, ii. 137
- "Whipping Toms," The, of Charles II.'s reign, ii. 71
- Whiskers and moustaches in Paris, i. 170, 171
- White, Mark Beresford, i. 11
- White House, Washington, Hospitality and cuisine at, i. 253, 254; destruction of original edifice by British troops, 263
- White's Club, ii. 174
- Whitecross Street Prison: The class of debtors confined there, ii. 63, 64; its appearance, 63, 64; its administration, 64; Chancery prisoners, 64, 65; chaplain, 65; bequests to debtors, and purchase of food and drink, 66; duties and wages of stewards, 67; entertainments, 67; an "out-of-elbow club," 68; artistic production of a prisoner, 68; hopelessness of inmates, 69

- Wigan, Alfred, His French scholarship, i. 15; in *Tom Thumb the Great*, ii. 134
- Wilkins, Mr. Serjeant, "bounces" the jury in Mr. "Quasimodo's" breach of promise case, ii. 46, 47
- Willard's Hotel, Washington, i. 255
- Williams's Boiled Beef House, Old Bailey, Dinners at, ii. 205-209; incident of the barrister and the waitrees, 208, 209
- Willis, Nathaniel Parker, His characteristics, i. 226, 227
- Wills, Mr. William Henry, assistant editor of *Household Words*, i. 73, 78, 90, 119
- Wilson, Professor, and the suppers at Ambrose's Tavern, i. 82
- "Word with *Punch*, A," i. 88, 89, 100
- Yates, Mr. Edmund, and his relations with Thackeray, i. 3-5, 99; and City chop-houses, ii. 200
- Yates, Frederick, as "Fagin," i. 55
- "Yemetchick Song," *The*, ii. 142
- Za-Ze-Zi-Zo-Zoo*, played at Drury Lane Theatre, ii. 114, 115



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